

VISION

California



Baldasare Forestiere (1879-1946) Auto Tunnel



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ABOUT CALIFORNIA

CLAES OLDENBURG

—*Kathan Brown interviewed Claes Oldenburg about California when he was in the bay area in June working on etchings at Crown Point Press. The interview was transcribed, and the artist has edited and re-worked it. KB's questions are in italics; CO's comments in Roman type.*

Each geographical area has its own feel which affects the artists there and it seems to affect those coming there too. Artists do so much traveling nowadays. That's part of art. But nobody is paying much attention to it. Artists are like pollinating bees; they go from place to place, and the place affects them and they affect the place.

Nowadays, I usually go to a place for a reason. I go to set up a show or to do prints. I usually don't travel without a definite purpose, though I should, I suppose. Sometimes I change my setting for a few months to stimulate my inspiration. I tend to exhaust a place. I exhausted New York in 1963 and I couldn't see any future of my being in New York because I had expressed New York, in my way, completely, for that period, anyway. So I came to Los Angeles in September of 1963 to start a new life as an artist in California. When I had my first west coast show at the Dwan Gallery, I was written up in the L.A. Times as a Venice artist.

That's the first time I saw your stuff, in 1963.

Yes, there had been a group show at the Dwan, earlier in the year, before I left New York, and then Patty and I came on to Los Angeles. I had a studio on Windward, the main street, in Venice, and we lived along one of the canals, sharing a bungalow with an airplant worker family. They got up every morning at 4:30 and we got up at 7:00 to work . . . worked all day and then came back. It was a great change from New York, except that it was somewhat the same level economically. I'd been living on the lower East Side in New York—this was just like the lower East Side only with palm trees. The canals took the place of the streets and there's even that section along the shore from Pacific to Park to Santa Monica that used to be like the lower East Side and had all the bagel houses and funny restaurants. It could have been lifted right off the lower East Side except that when you turned around there was the whole Pacific Ocean.

Did that make a difference to your work—all that ocean?

Yes, I loved being able to open the back door and see the Pacific in different weather. The ocean is a good symbol for the sense of wide space and isolation of the West and its corresponding mood: nostalgia. Human beings seemed scarce and diminished in importance, unlike Manhattan. Venice was not so taken apart as it is now, and more of an outpost. P.O.P. Park was there, and the crazy train ran up and down the beach. There are many memories. My experience in California is so complicated . . . it's a long story with many chapters, different periods.

You had been to California before you came to L.A. in '63, hadn't you?

I first came out when I was seventeen and then seven years later, to San Francisco and Oakland in 1953, and then the time just referred to. After 1963, I didn't return for any length of time until 1968, except to make those cakes for Jim Elliot's wedding in 1966. After 1968 I spent a lot of time in California.

How do you feel about Los Angeles?

L.A. is so legendary that one knows before going there what one can expect to find, and one is pleased to find that it's all true, or displeased, as the case may be. I have never adjusted to L.A. I have always been

there as a spectator, a peculiar pale man in dark clothes, with his mind full, staying at a New York Hotel—the Chateau Marmont—hanging around New York-type places and seeking out displaced east coasters and Europeans. I feel I've never really penetrated the culture, but studied it from a distance. When I spend as long a time in a place as I have in Los Angeles I get into a municipal report, an analysis of the place, and that was done in the *Notes of Gemini* in 1968 and the *Double Nose Punching Bay Ash-tray Notes* in 1970. Images with a literary dimension, not just images but text to go along with it. I've done that in Chicago too, and, of course, New York. I also did a performance about the place, *Autobodys*, in 1963—another way of summarizing my sensations and impressions. Almost everything I do is oriented to a particular place and belongs there, even if it doesn't eventually wind up there. The *Bedroom Ensemble* belongs in L.A. but is in Canada and Germany; the *Ice Bag* belongs in L.A. but is in a basement in Baltimore. But L.A. is seductive, it has a lure which always takes me in, even though I know that the actual experience in the city can be very empty. Eroticism, erotic fantasies are an industry in L.A., of



1963, VENICE, CALIFORNIA

course. When I came to L.A. in 1963, one of the first things I did was to visit the publishers of the nudist and girlie magazines I had read on the east coast, and it was interesting to see how they worked, retouching, selecting pictures, combating censors and so on. The nudist magazines did "field trips" and I proposed one for my opening at the Dwan Gallery. They agreed, but it was called off; the group went to Catalina instead. But later they sent a woman over to be photographed using the objects. This sort of thing was a part of the landscape, and I didn't want to leave it out. I'll always believe that L.A. is out of date somehow, an earlier time, with the glow that times past seem to have. The prevalence of art deco contributes to that, and the actual time difference of three hours, which furthers the isolation from the east. And then there's the realization that you are actually in the place that is always shown on TV, the familiar streets where the cops chase each other up and down. I think movies are more important than anyone will admit, and the fact that they're in L.A. gives the city status. I feel inferior to the film industry when I'm in L.A., like an outsider. Only in New York do I feel status as an artist, that the number of artists creates a force to be taken seriously in the economy and activity of the city, which is one reason I like to return there, keep my headquarters there. L.A. is much closer to nature than New York; nature invades it, and poses a constant threat: fire, earthquake and so on, an anxiety the citizens seem to

enjoy. It's only a few miles to the desert. There's a lot of fear and apprehension in L.A., but it's not so much of people as of objects such as cars or natural forces, or even a generalized sense of evil, which is perhaps the puritan mind scaring itself for living in too much of a paradise.

One of the things people often say about Los Angeles and San Francisco is that Los Angeles artists are very technologically oriented and San Francisco is the reverse. Do you agree?

Probably. It's been that way for me. When I came to L.A. in 1963, I was reacting against hand-made work, subjectivity, which I then identified with New York. Perhaps I was just in that mood, but L.A. certainly lent itself to this development, to fabrication, collaboration with technology, the artist expressing himself through industry. This beginning became my take on L.A. thereafter, and it only increased with Gemini and the L.A. County Museum Art and Technology project. In San Francisco, the artists do seem to go up into the woods. Perhaps it's because I stay in the cities that I don't seem to meet many Bay Area artists. But what we're doing here, sitting in the middle of Oakland, is certainly technological—your workshop—and I have been looking around for fabrication possibilities, going against the grain. Still, there is Potts with his cars and Voulkos, and down in L.A. you have Wally Berman. The opposition of S.F. and L.A. may be false. There are two strains, that's all, all through America, city and country. S.F. is a big sophisticated city. The great comics scene is certainly a city art, and so is the pornographic industry.

I wanted to ask you about what was happening in San Francisco in '53, when you were out here, what were you doing?

By the time I got to Los Angeles in '63 I was developed as an artist. In '53—ten years before—I was just beginning. I had left the City News Bureau, where I worked as a reporter, and started to study art in '52. In '53 I had gone to a summer art school in Michigan and really gotten all excited and totally committed to art.

Cranbrook?

No, this was a much less formal situation, in Saugatuck, Michigan, a very free situation run by Milwaukee artists. I couldn't readjust to Chicago after that and started to move. I tried living in Milwaukee for a while. I was looking for a typically American city—to develop my art in. I was rather naive then about possibilities in America, and I had a strong prejudice against going to New York. But when Milwaukee paled after a few days, I set out for other places. My next stop was New Orleans, and of course there was no art going on there. From there I took the bus cross-country to Los Angeles. This was September, 1953. I didn't know anybody in Los Angeles. In L.A., when you arrive, if you don't know or haven't studied a map of Los Angeles, you have no idea of where the city is. I mean, you can walk into a bar as I did and think that you're in Los Angeles, but you're not sure. Years later, I learned that my part of the city was somewhere along La Cienega Avenue or up in Venice, but in those days I had no idea where my part of the city might be. It was a total unrewarding mystery and seemed menacing besides. So I continued on to San Francisco.

Did you know anyone in San Francisco?

I knew Bob Natkin, who was living in a flat on Columbus Ave. I went to see him, and he assured me that there was absolutely nothing happening in San Francisco, which wasn't true, but I decided to stay anyway, because I liked the city. Through Bob and through the City Lights Bookstore which was just opening, I got into a loft out on Masonic Ave., off the Panhandle, which was full of Wally Hedrick paintings. You say the fall is nice in San Francisco,

but I was freezing, really cold. It was too cold in the loft, so I spent a lot of time wandering in the city, at all times of day. The city was the incarnation of many fantasy landscapes I had done. Under the influence of all the vapor and light, and because it was practical, I did water colors. It's the wanderers' medium. I established few connections with artists. I felt shy because my art was undeveloped. I did go to the Art Institute a couple of times, and I remember seeing Douglas McAgy there. They had a few parties I remember. I met a poet, Jack Spicer, who came from the east. Everybody played a banjo. This was very early, before the poetic revival.

Oakland is so off-the-wall. How come you ended up here?

After a lot of walking up and down hills, I ran out of money and had to look for a job. Having been a dishwasher at the summer camp, I thought I would apply for a dishwashing job. I had a diploma from Yale University and had worked as a newspaper man, and so on, but you know how it is, I didn't want to get involved with the system in that way. I just wanted a very simple job so that I could continue my personal study of art. I answered an ad for a dishwasher in Oakland. It was on Jackson Street, down near Lake Merritt . . . a yellow Victorian-style boarding house, a very elegant building called "The Senator." The owner, a woman, told me the job was filled, but when I showed her some of my water colors she said she would let me live in the basement if I would do water colors as payment. She figured the room was worth about twenty-five dollars a month and a couple of water colors would cover it. It was a very pleasant situation. I stayed in that boarding house for about two months. This was a period when I really learned how to draw; I did nothing else. I would go down to Lake Merritt to draw trees or go up to the local art store, and go through their whole stock, studying their papers and their pens. I hadn't had enough formal education in art; this was a period of self-education. At night I drew figures from memory. I did about 50 drawings a day. Every Saturday I bought myself a quart of beer and that was my amusement for the week. I never got back to San Francisco.

I like being in Oakland. It's in the bay area, but is somehow anonymous. Artists work here now because studio space is cheap. I don't know about 1953.

I didn't see too many people. I was dealing mostly with vegetation, light and atmosphere and the look of the mountains. I think the most important thing in this area is the presence of atmosphere in the form of fog or mist and other ways that the light is filtered onto the landscape.

It's very important to a lot of artists here.

Yes. The light, the color is very important. The presence of color everywhere. The ochres, the olive colors, the dark green. The color is in the man-made structures too, like the pink on the Mexicali Rose restaurant.

Everyone who comes out here always mentions the light. I remember when Brice Marden came out, he sat down in our studio and the first day he looked out the window and said, "My God, look at the light! I don't know if I can work in that light!"

You do let a lot of light in here. The sense of intense light here may come from the white surfaces. New York structures are gray. Downtown L.A., an exception, is just like St. Louis. There's a cultivation of white here, cultivation of light, the violent white of those plaster structures. The light in New York is intense too, but its best effects are shadows and silhouettes; it just doesn't bounce off the buildings. But it's really the atmosphere that counts here, the silvers in the evening from the mist and the changes in space that result from the atmosphere. One of the great

color experiences is the pools in the south end of the bay as you fly in—are they salt pools? It's especially good if you wear Polaroid glasses. When I come out now to San Francisco, I always try to get a room overlooking the Bay so I can see the changes in color and the changes in lights and the behavior of the skies and water. One of the first things I did at Crown Point was the etching of smoke reflected in water deliberately like the sort of thing I did in Oakland in 1953. Every morning I photographed the view from my window. I never saw a palm tree before I came here. And I never saw a eucalyptus tree. I really fell in love with the eucalyptus trees, the color and structures of them, the way they move, and the way they smell. The smell. That's another thing that this part of the country has . . . smells. Even on the worst day in Los Angeles, there's a beautiful smell of flowers in there somewhere, you know, in the mess. Like Paris and some cities that are remembered for their smells.

Sights, smells, all those physical things add up to something mental. When you came out here from the east, did you find it affected your state of mind?

If you drive from west to east, it's a closing in, a very depressing sensation. If you drive from the east coast to the west coast, it's a revelation and opening up. There is definitely a different state of mind that you're aiming for when you come west. That very first time I came west when I was about seventeen years old I was a traveling secretary with some Swedish businessmen. When we got to Los Angeles I quit. They gave me a ticket back which I cashed in. I rented a car and moved to a motel near Malibu. Walking up and down the beach there, at the edge of the continent, I felt free of all responsibility. It didn't last long and I soon got bored, but I remember that feeling of freedom. I grew a beard; that was unusual in those days. Eden Abhez, author of "Nature Boy," had just been discovered living in Griffith Park. Eventually I ran into a Swedish engineer who was going to study dam facilities at Las Vegas. We stayed at the Flamingo—this was early Vegas—rather undeveloped, but even then like nothing I'd ever seen. From Las Vegas I continued alone up to Salt Lake City and Wyoming, hitchhiking and by bus. The whole idea of escape, you know, coming out and opening up, and the sense of adventure, it's all very important to coming west. That was travel for experience per se. It's the last time I traveled without a reason.

Doing these prints here is the first actual work you've done in the bay area since '53?

Yes. I've only been here visiting for shows or to lecture. This is the first time I've stayed to work here. I like to get a few different things going at once in a place. This time it's only prints, but I may get into some casting later. I visited the foundry that Don Rich has down by the bay in Berkeley. I may do some hard versions of the *Soft Screw* there.

I hear Don Rich is a good craftsman, so there's another resource to offer artists like yourself who would like to come here.

Yes, and some reason for going someplace is very important; a dealer or a print shop, a fabricator. You know that you will be welcomed, something will come out of it. I think that I was one of the first New York artists of my generation to come out and really settle into California. John Chamberlain was about the only one who preceded me out there. He was doing spray paintings in a garage in Venice. Virginia Dwan had a lot to do with bringing people out there and, as you say, you mentioned the pollinating effect, a gallery like that was very important, I think.

There usually has to be something. . . .

After Virginia there was Gemini. They were somewhat resented for not using artists in the community, but I think it was more important for them to bring in New York artists and let L.A. see what these artists they had only read about looked like and let them become part of the community. I think it had a good softening expansive effect on Los Angeles art. Now Los Angeles artists travel all over the world, live in London, but in those days nobody traveled over the mountains. Maybe San Francisco is more insular, because there haven't been too many reasons for artists to come out here.

People started coming out here to make etchings at Crown Point four years ago. Now Dan Weinberg is bringing people and occasionally a museum or art school brings someone. But it's still slow.

Well, the reason it's slow may be that there aren't too many collectors out here. That always makes a big difference. Los Angeles is a better market.

You do so much traveling, I was wondering how you manage to keep up any kind of relationship?

I always used to ask someone along when I went someplace.

It's awfully nice to have somebody with you.

Yes, it can be a very positive thing. You discover much more about your surroundings if you have another person with you, especially of the other sex because she can see the thing from a different viewpoint and make, form relationships that you perhaps don't have time to get around to. But more often now I don't ask anyone along. I've become more selfish with my time, and you could say being alone intensifies experience in a place. I'm inclined to observe rather than form relationships anyway. Traveling suits my attitude, and I love making travel plans, imagining places, packing, seeing if I can remember everything, learning not to leave things, deadlines, keeping a logbook—all that goes along with travel. Travel has become an aesthetic activity for me.

Where are you going after you leave Oakland?

To Los Angeles, to check on the *Alphabet/Good Humor*, then to Denver, to look at my traveling show again, then to Tulsa about a commission, then to Chicago to work on a lithograph and poster, then to Akron, about my rubber *Inverted Q*, and finally back to New York. There are things I'm involved in going on in all these places around the country, simultaneously. I like that, as if the whole country is a studio.

-end-



1953, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

OUT FRONT

TOM MARIONI

THE NUMBER OF ARTISTS IN ANY GIVEN PLACE DO NOT MAKE IT AN ART CENTER. AS WITH SCIENCE, AN ART CENTER IS MADE BY A FEW PEOPLE DOING ORIGINAL RESEARCH. IT IS EXPANDED WHEN BY SOME MEANS (USUALLY CALLED "SUPPORT SYSTEM") THE WORD GETS OUT THAT SOMETHING IS BEING DONE THERE, AND MORE INTERESTED PEOPLE COME. THIS EXPANSION HAS GOTTEN OUT OF HAND IN NEW YORK, WHERE THOUSANDS OF ARTISTS ARE LIVING WITHIN A FEW BLOCKS OF EACH OTHER IN AN INCESTUOUS PEYTON PLACE WHERE EVERYONE KNOWS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS. AN ART WORLD THAT ONCE LOOKED LIKE IT WOULD GO ON EVOLVING FOREVER HAS COME TO A STANDSTILL; AN ART WORLD THAT FOR THIRTY YEARS HAS LOOKED ONLY AT ITSELF IN THE MIRROR IS NOW SHOWING SIGNS OF OLD AGE.

NEW YORK IS STILL A CENTER. BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE RENAISSANCE THERE ARE MANY CENTERS. ARTISTS AROUND THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD ARE FINDING THEIR IDENTITIES WHERE THEY ARE, RATHER THAN GOING TO NEW YORK. TODAY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WORK BEING DONE IS THAT WHICH IS MOST CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ARTIST'S REGION. FOR A RANCHER'S SON IN TEXAS TO PAINT GRIDS LIKE THE BUILDINGS OF NEW YORK CITY DOESN'T MAKE IT.

THE ARTISTS OF NEW YORK, THOSE THAT MADE IT AN ART CENTER, ARE TRAVELING, MOVING OUT TO DO THEIR WORK IN OTHER PLACES, AS THE SUPPORT SYSTEM WIDENS. AND ARTISTS FROM OTHER PLACES ARE TRAVELING, SO THERE IS A WORLD-WIDE INTERACTION AMONG ARTISTS. THE MAIN THING THIS ACCOMPLISHES IS THAT IT MAKES EVERYONE AWARE OF WHAT HAS BEEN AND IS BEING DONE.

THIS NETWORK OF INTERACTION IS MUCH FASTER AND SURER THAN THE SUPPORT SYSTEM. ARTISTS FIND OTHER ARTISTS WHO ARE OF INTEREST TO THEM. MUSEUMS AND MAGAZINES ARE SO INVOLVED WITH FAIRNESS TO ALL STYLES THAT THEY CANNOT SORT OUT WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT AND WHAT IS REPETITION. IN FACT REPETITION IS MORE COMFORTABLE, SO THEY GO WITH IT, FINALLY DISCOVERING AN ART IDEA WHEN IT IS USED UP. THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN CHICAGO ORGANIZED A SHOW CALLED "BODY WORKS" THIS YEAR THAT THEY NAIVELY ANNOUNCED AS THE FIRST SUCH SHOW. IN 1970 "BODY WORKS" APPEARED AT MOCA; IN 1971 THE LA JOLLA MUSEUM HAD A SHOW OF "BODY WORKS," ALSO LISTED IN THE PRESS RELEASE AS THE FIRST. IT NEVER OCCURED TO THEM TO ASK THE ARTISTS; BRUCE NAUMAN, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS IN ALL THREE SHOWS. ANYHOW, ALTHOUGH "BODY WORKS" HAS AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN ART HISTORY, IN 1975 EVEN THE NOTION OF BODY ART IS AS EXTINCT AS HIPPIES.

ARTISTS LOSE RESPECT FOR MUSEUMS AS IMPORTANT PLACES TO EXHIBIT WHEN THEY SHOW OLD WORK AS NEW WORK; WHEN NEW WORK APPEARS ONLY OCCASIONALLY, PRESENTED IN DUBIOUS COMPANY; AND WHEN THE MUSEUM SPACES ARE MONTH TO MONTH OVERWHELMINGLY FILLED BY TRIVIAL ART.

MUSEUMS AND MAGAZINES ALSO, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT TALK TO ARTISTS, SOMETIMES GET HOLD OF AN ART IDEA PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO THEM AND MISHANDLE IT. THIS IS HAPPENING NOW WITH PERFORMANCE OR ACTION ART. MUSEUMS, GALLERIES AND ART MAGAZINES CAUSE CONFUSION BY MIXING IT UP WITH DANCE, THEATER, MUSIC AND OTHER FORMS OUTSIDE THE VISUAL ARTS. TO DO A SERIES OF DANCES AND CONCERTS, SPRINKLED WITH ART ACTIONS—OR TO PUBLISH ARTICLES IN ART MAGAZINES ON THESE OTHER ART FORMS—SUGGESTS THE ORGANIZERS DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE EVOLUTION OF SCULPTURE INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION. AN EXAMPLE OF A MUSEUM'S TREATMENT OF PERFORMANCE ART AS ENTERTAINMENT OCCURRED THIS SUMMER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MUSEUM AT BERKELEY. THEY INVITED SEVERAL PAINTERS WHO HAD NEVER BEFORE DONE PERFORMANCE ART (AS WELL AS DANCERS, POETS, AND PERFORMANCE ARTISTS) TO DO WORKS IN A PERFORMANCE SERIES. THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ASKED PERFORMANCE SCULPTORS TO DO PAINTINGS FOR THEIR MUSEUM.

OF COURSE, A PAINTER COULD BECOME A PERFORMANCE SCULPTOR, OR VICE VERSA. AND A DANCER OR MUSICIAN COULD CONCEIVABLY BECOME A SCULPTOR. BUT BECAUSE SCULPTORS ARE NOW USING SOUND, MOVEMENT OR LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM DOES NOT MEAN THEY HAVE BECOME MUSICIANS, DANCERS OR POETS, NOR HAVE ALL MUSICIANS, DANCERS, POETS

SUDDENLY BECOME SCULPTORS. THE ATTITUDES ARE DIFFERENT.

A LOT OF THE CONFUSION THAT MUSEUM PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT PERFORMANCE SCULPTURE IS THAT THEY ARE ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO ASSIMILATE HAPPENINGS, AND THEY SEE PERFORMANCE SCULPTURE AS HAPPENINGS, WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT WHAT WENT ON IN BETWEEN.

THE HAPPENINGS THAT GREW OUT OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM IN NEW YORK, DANCE IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND THEATER IN EAST AND WEST EUROPE, WERE ALL AN EXTENSION OF THEATER, EVEN THOUGH SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF VISUAL ARTISTS. IT WAS STILL AN AGE OF PAINTERS, AND THEY THOUGHT ILLUSIONISTICALLY. MATERIALS WERE PROPS, AS IN THEATER, AND THE WORKS WERE USUALLY REPEATED AND SCRIPTED. IT WAS AN AUDIENCE-PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF AN ENCOUNTER-GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS. THIS WAS THE TIME OF BEATNIKS, POETRY READING TO MUSIC AND HARD-BOP JAZZ—THE LATE '50s AND EARLY '60s.

IN THE EARLY '60s AN AGE OF SCULPTORS BEGAN. PAINTING RETREATED INTO ILLUSION, SMOOTHNESS, ANTI-MATERIALITY, FIRST WITH POP ART, THEN WITH PHOTO-REALISM.

THE SCULPTURE OF THE '60s REACTED AGAINST THE ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM, AND CREATED AN INTELLECTUAL ART. SCULPTURE STOOD FLAT ON THE FLOOR AND CONCERNED ITSELF WITH REDUCTIVENESS. LATER, A MATERIALS CONSCIOUSNESS DEVELOPED, UNTIL BY THE LATE '60s THE MATERIALS OF THE SCULPTOR INCLUDED LIGHT, SOUND, LANGUAGE, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, AND THE ARTIST'S BODY. BECAUSE THE WORK OF THE SCULPTOR BECAME SO MUCH LIKE SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTATION, USING AESTHETICS AS ITS FORM, THE PROCESS BECAME THE ART, AND TIME, THE FOURTH DIMENSION, BECAME A FACTOR. SCULPTORS BEGAN TO MAKE INSTALLATIONS OR ENVIRONMENTS, TEMPORARILY INSTALLED IN A SPACE. AND THEY BEGAN TO MAKE ACTIONS, NOT DIRECTED AT THE PRODUCTION OF STATIC OBJECTS BUT RATHER AT ITSELF AS ITS ACTIVITY. THE ACTION IS DIRECTED AT THE MATERIALS RATHER THAN AT THE AUDIENCE AS IN THEATER.

THE SPIRAL OF ART MOVEMENTS AND LIFE IN GENERAL BEFORE 1970 HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY TIGHTER AND FASTER. IN T.V. THE COMMERCIAL OF 1960 WAS SIXTY SECONDS LONG AND IN 1970 IT TOOK THIRTY SECONDS, TO CONVEY THE SAME INFORMATION. THE CULTURE IN TEN YEARS HAD LEARNED TO USE UP PRODUCTS, INFORMATION, AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN HALF THE TIME. POST-OBJECT-ART CREATES A SLOWING-DOWN PROCESS, A REAL-TIME CONSCIOUSNESS, BECAUSE THE ARTIST KNOWS IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE CULTURE TO BECOME REFLECTIVE.

SAN FRANCISCO

THERE IS A STORY THAT MARCEL DUCHAMP VISITED THE SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE, WHICH WAS CONSIDERING OFFERING HIM A JOB AS A TEACHER (THEY DECIDED NOT TO), IN 1949. IN ONE OF THE STUDIOS HE PAUSED TO WATCH A STUDENT, BILL MOREHOUSE, PAINTING. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" DUCHAMP ASKED.

"I DON'T KNOW," REPLIED MOREHOUSE.

"KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK," SAID DUCHAMP.

SOON AFTER THAT, IN THE '50s, CLYFFORD STILL TAUGHT AT THE SCHOOL, AND THE MOOD BECAME "SERIOUS," PAINTERLY" AND PEDANTIC. BUT THE NOTION OF ART AS A SEARCH, AS PHILOSOPHY, WAS ESTABLISHED. A STUDENT OF STILL'S, RICHARD DIEBENKORN, ESTABLISHED AN IDENTITY FOR SAN FRANCISCO. HE DROPPED OUT FROM ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM TO DEAL WITH SUBJECT MATTER, BUT HIS DISTINCT USE OF LIGHT IN HIS PAINTING STARTED THE STYLE KNOWN AS BAY AREA FIGURATIVE, WHICH, ALONG WITH FUNK, IS WHAT PEOPLE OF THE STRAIGHT ART COMMUNITY IN OTHER PLACES MOST ASSOCIATE WITH SAN FRANCISCO, EVEN NOW. VARIOUS COMBINATIONS OF BAY AREA FIGURATIVE AND FUNK ARE STILL THE DOMINANT STYLE OF THE LARGE MAJORITY OF ARTISTS IN THE BAY AREA.

WAYNE THIEBAUD, ONE OF THE MANY ARTISTS DIEBENKORN INFLUENCED, WAS A LINK BETWEEN CALIFORNIA AND NEW YORK IDEAS. HIS PAINTINGS IN THE EARLY '60s WERE CLEAN AND FORMAL, OF POP IMAGES, BUT THEY WERE HALOED WITH COMPLEMENTARY COLORS, AS IF SEEN THROUGH A PRISM OF SUNLIGHT. THIS WAS A VERY CALIFORNIA TREATMENT. THEY WERE STRAIGHT STILL-LIFE WORKS OF COLORFUL COMMON OBJECTS: THIEBAUD WAS THE LAST POP ARTIST AND THE FIRST NEW REALIST. SOME OTHER ARTISTS WERE INTERESTED IN HIS REALISM, BUT REJECTED THE LUSH-



NESS AND MATERIALITY OF HIS WORK. THEY SOUGHT MORE DETACHMENT, AND PHOTO-REALISM EMERGED, AN ART EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND TO MARKET, ACCEPTED BY THE MASSES AND PROMOTED BY THE ENTIRE SUPPORT SYSTEM.

AT THE TIME DIEBENKORN WAS DOING BAY AREA FIGURATIVE ART, FRED MARTIN WAS ALSO DOING LOOSELY PAINTED FIGURATIVE WORK, BUT HIS SUBJECTS WERE ANCIENT RUINS AND MYTHICAL LANDSCAPES. WHILE DIEBENKORN'S WORK IS BASED ON LIGHT, FRED MARTIN'S HAS NO LIGHT SOURCE. IT LIVES IN A REALM WHERE THE LIGHT IS IN THE CENTER AND IS IMAGINARY. FRED MARTIN WAS FIRST KNOWN FOR COLLAGES COVERED WITH HANDWRITTEN MESSAGES. HE HAS WORKED ABSTRACTLY AND FIGURATIVELY BY TURNS, BUT ALWAYS IS EXPLORING HIS WORLD.

HE WAS THE FIRST MYTHICAL STORY-TELLING ARTIST HERE, AND HIS WORLD HAS HAD A BIG INFLUENCE ON AN ORGANIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE BAY AREA, A CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE DISTANT PAST. THIS MYTHICAL INFLUENCE EXISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO TODAY EVEN AMONG THE CONCEPTUAL ARTISTS.

BRUCE CONNER WAS A FUNK ARTIST OF THE EARLY '60s. SINCE THEN HE HAS CONTINUED TO CHANGE AS AN ARTIST, ALWAYS APPEARING TO BE AHEAD OF HIS TIME. A SCULPTOR WHO STARTED MAKING FILMS BEFORE WARHOL, HE HAS INFLUENCED AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF UNDERGROUND FILMMAKERS WHO USE ABRUPT CUTTING, REPEATED ACTIONS AND SURREALISTIC JUXTAPOSITIONS. HIS FUNK ASSEMBLAGES WERE BIZARRE WORKS FULL OF FETISH-LIKE OBJECTS. CONNER'S WORK IS ROOTED IN SURREALISM, AS IS THE WORK OF MANY BAY AREA ARTISTS.

BILL WILEY WAS INFLUENCED BY FRED MARTIN, AND IN TURN INFLUENCED HIM. WILEY HAS DEVELOPED A DUCHAMPIAN VERSION OF A COUNTRY AND WESTERN-STYLE HUCKLEBERRY FINN ATTITUDE, A KIND OF WESTERN SURREALISM MADE OF STICKS AND STONES AND RAWHIDE, FULL OF SECRET MESSAGES. HIS INFLUENCE IS SEEN ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. IT IS INTERESTING TO ME THAT ARTISTS IN LOS ANGELES INFLUENCED BY HIS USE OF MATERIALS, MAKE WORKS IN A CLEANED-UP WAY, LIKE DEPARTMENT STORE WINDOW VERSIONS OF WM. T. WILEY.

IN 1969, WHEN I WAS WORKING AT THE RICHMOND ART CENTER AS CURATOR, I ORGANIZED A SHOW CALLED "THE RETURN OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM." I WROTE IN THE CATALOG INTRODUCTION:

This exhibition of abstract expressionism is a direct extension of the paintings of the '50's; the action is the same only the dimensions are different. The artists exhibit the same love of organic and natural forces, they place a familiar emphasis on the role of accident and chance. The renewed interest in natural forces and raw materials exists for several reasons. There is, certainly, a tremendous dissatisfaction with the destructive forces of modern culture; war, pollution, and the generally widespread ignorance of nature. Another influence is the popularity of drug use, and the religious importance that it places on an awareness of our environment.

THAT SHOW SEEMED TO SIGNAL A NEW GENERATION EMERGING IN THE BAY AREA. IT INCLUDED, AMONG OTHERS, TERRY FOX, PAUL KOS AND MEL HENDERSON. HENDERSON WAS A LINK FROM THE PREVIOUS GENERATION, AS HE WAS PART OF THE FUNK MOVEMENT. THEN IN '69 HE ABANDONED OBJECT-ART TO DO LARGE-SCALE CITY EVENTS. ONE OF THESE, IN COLLABORATION WITH ALF YOUNG, USED 150 YELLOW CABS, TAKEN BY PARTICIPANTS IN ALL PARTS OF THE CITY AT THE SAME TIME TO THE CORNER OF A FIVE-WAY INTERSECTION AT THE CENTER OF SAN FRANCISCO. HENDERSON FILMED FROM THE AIR THE BURSTING SUNFLOWER EFFECT THIS CREATED. HE HAS NOW DROPPED OUT OF THE ART SCENE AND LIVES IN THE COUNTRY, WHICH PUTS HIM INTO ANOTHER GENERATION OF ARTISTS, REALIZING CREATIVE ENERGIES IN AN ART-LIFE FORM.

AS AN ARTIST I WAS INVOLVED WITH CONCEPTUAL ART AT THE TIME I WAS AT RICHMOND, AND THIS LED ME TO DO SEVERAL SHOWS FOR WHICH I WAS FIRED AS A CURATOR. I MADE MY LAST PIECE OF STATIC SCULPTURE IN 1968 AND BEGAN EXPERIMENTING WITH SUBJECTS NOT NORMALLY CONSIDERED SCULPTURE MATERIAL, LIKE THE SENSATIONS OF TASTE AND LATER SOUND. HAVING STUDIED MUSIC AND BEEN A JAZZ LISTENER FOR SO LONG, THE ACTIONS I PRODUCED WERE INFLUENCED BY JAZZ, A STRUCTURE TO IMPROVISE IN.

WORKING AS A CURATOR INFLUENCED MY WORK TO TAKE ON A SOCIAL NATURE. "THE ACT OF DRINKING BEER WITH FRIENDS IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF ART" WAS A SOCIAL WORK DONE IN 1970. I LEFT THE DEBRIS ON EXHIBIT AS EVIDENCE-DOCUMENTATION OF THIS SOCIAL ACT THAT TOOK PLACE. THE MUSEUM OF CONCEPTUAL ART IS ALSO A SOCIAL AND PUBLIC ART WORK. RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN DRUMMING WITH WIRE DRUM BRUSHES ON PAPER, CREATING DAILY ACTIVITY, MAKING AMPLIFIED AND REVERBERATED SOUNDS AND RUBBINGS ON PAPER, IN AN ATTEMPT TO FIND AN ORDER FOR MYSELF.

WHEN I STARTED THE MUSEUM OF CONCEPTUAL ART, MOCA, AT THE BEGINNING OF 1970, TERRY FOX WAS USING PART OF IT AS HIS STUDIO. WE WERE SHARING THE SPACE AND HE WAS A KIND OF ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE MUSEUM. HE WAS WORKING WITH THE ELEMENTS AT THAT TIME, AND EVER SINCE HIS ACTIONS HAVE HAD A SCIENTIFIC-EXPERIMENTAL NATURE TO THEM. HIS MOST KNOWN WORK, "LEVITATION PIECE," 1970, FUNCTIONED AS AN ENVIRONMENT, WHERE ALL THE CONDITIONS WERE RIGHT FOR LEVITATION, AN ATTEMPT TO GET OUTSIDE HIS BODY. THIS WAS AT A TIME WHEN HE WAS SERIOUSLY ILL WITH HOCHKINS DISEASE.

MORE RECENTLY, SINCE 1972, TERRY FOX HAS BEEN DOING TRANSLATIONS OF THE LABYRINTH AT CHARTRES CATHEDRAL IN FRANCE. THESE HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF PERFORMANCES, INSTALLATIONS, OR VIDEOTAPES. LAST YEAR HE DID "THIRTY-FOUR CHILDREN'S TAPES," INSTRUCTIVE ACTIONS DEMONSTRATING THE PHYSICS OF MATERIALS LIKE FIRE AND WATER, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF GRAVITY AND BALANCE. HIS TWO PAGES IN VISION REPRESENT THE AUDIO-VIDEO SCORE FOR A TAPE HE IS NOW WORKING ON.

PAUL KOS IN 1969 WAS WORKING OUTDOORS MAKING EARTH WORKS. BEING FROM WYOMING, WHERE THERE IS SO MUCH WIDE-OPEN SPACE, OBVIOUSLY INFLUENCED HIM. AT THAT TIME HE RE-CREATED YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, CONDENSED INTO SIXTY-FOUR SQUARE FEET. HE WAS ALSO MAKING INVISIBLE WORKS THAT COULD ONLY BE SMELLED. EACH SUMMER HE GOES BACK TO WYOMING TO MAKE WORKS IN THE DESERT AND VIDEOTAPE THEM. IN THE FIRST SHOW IN MOCA, "SOUND SCULPTURE AS," 1970, KOS RECORDED THE SILENT SOUNDS OF TWO TWENTY-FIVE-POUND BLOCKS OF ICE MELTING. LIKE THE INVISIBLE PIECE YOU COULD ONLY SMELL, THIS WAS A SOUND PIECE YOU COULD ONLY SEE.

JIM MELCHERT MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF IN THE '60s AS ONE OF THE BAY AREA'S FOREMOST CERAMIC SCULPTORS. ABOUT 1969 HE BEGAN EXPERIMENTING WITH SITUATIONAL IDEAS, AND WAS WINDING DOWN HIS STATIC WORKS. MELCHERT, WHO TEACHES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DOES WORK THAT SHOWS A KIND OF TEACHER'S MENTALITY. IT USUALLY GIVES A LESSON. HIS MATERIALS, SLIDES AND FILM, ARE LIKE TRAINING AIDS FOR EXPRESSING HIS IDEAS. IN A WORK AT THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM IN 1973, HE PHOTOGRAPHED HIS WALL OF THE EXHIBITION SPACE; THIS WALL CONTAINED A DOOR. HE THEN PROJECTED HIS SLIDES OF THE WALL ONTO THE WALL, EACH SLIDE WITH THE GHOSTLY FIGURE IN THE DOORWAY OF A DIFFERENT ARTIST WHO HAD EXHIBITED IN THAT SPACE.

PAUL COTTON, BECAUSE OF THE UNUSUAL NATURE OF HIS WORK, HAS BEEN COMPLETELY PASSED OVER BY THE TRADITIONAL MODERN ART MUSEUMS IN THE BAY AREA. BUT HE HAS BEEN INVITED TO SHOW IN EXHIBITIONS ALL OVER THE WORLD. HE HAS BEEN EXPOSING HIMSELF FOR A DECADE IN PUBLIC, LONG BEFORE SUCH A MOVEMENT AS BODY ART CAME INTO EXISTENCE.

COTTON USES RITUAL AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONY IN HIS SCULPTURE ACTIONS. AT DOCUMENTA IN '72 HE HAD HIS FEE PUT ASIDE TO COVER LEGAL COSTS IN CASE HE WAS BUSTED FOR ESTABLISHING A SACRED SPACE IN THE MUSEUM WHILE PASSING OUT JOINTS TO THE PUBLIC. COTTON'S DRESSING UP IN HIS PHALLIC COSTUME AS "THE PEOPLE'S PRICK" AND HIS "ASTRAL-NAUGHT" BUNNY COSTUME (WITH ANTENNA AND EXPOSED GENITALS, PAINTED WHITE), HAS INFLUENCED A GROUP OF CANADIAN ARTISTS WHO DRESS IN BIZARRE SEXUAL COSTUMES.

HOWARD FRIED'S WORK IS SO COMPLEX AND FULL OF IMAGES THAT FEW PEOPLE REALLY APPRECIATE THE WORK BECAUSE IT IS NOT EASY TO UNDERSTAND. HE USES THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES IN THE REALIZATION

OF HIS COMPLEX TIME COMBINES. IN '73 HE CONSTRUCTED AN ENVIRONMENT WITH RECTANGULAR HOLES FOR SPECTATORS AND OTHER HOLES FOR VIDEO CAMERAS. FRIED FUNCTIONED AS AN ENGINEER, MONITORING FOUR VIDEO IMAGES FROM BEHIND THE SCENE, SELECTING ONLY ONE PICTURE THAT WAS SHOWN TO THE PUBLIC. THE ACTIVITY INSIDE THE ENVIRONMENT, PARTICIPANTS DRINKING COFFEE, WAS SEEN BY A LIVE AUDIENCE WITNESSING THE ACTIVITY THROUGH THE HOLES, AND ALSO BY THE CAMERAS WHOSE POSITIONS WERE AT WAIST LEVEL RECORDING THE MOVEMENT OF THE CREAM PITCHER AS IT WAS PASSED AROUND. SO THE ACTIVITY FUNCTIONED FROM TWO SIMULTANEOUS POINTS OF VIEW. FRIED'S CURRENT WORK IS HIGHLY EDITED FILMS AND VIDEOTAPES OF HIS INSANE ACTIVITIES.

BONNIE SHERK, INFLUENCED BY MEL HENDERSON'S AWARENESS OF NATURE, DID A SERIES OF PORTABLE PARKS AROUND THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO ON CLOSED STREETS, AND AT THE END OF FREEWAY SECTIONS, WITH LIVE ANIMALS, TREES AND GRASS. SHE DID A PERFORMANCE IN THE ZOO AT FEEDING TIME EATING AN ELEGANT DINNER IN A CAGE NEXT TO A TIGER. SHE HAS BUILT CIRCULAR SYSTEMS IN HER STUDIO USING LIVE ANIMALS THAT PRODUCED FECES THAT WERE USED TO FERTILIZE PLANT LIFE ON A LOWER LEVEL THAT WAS IN TURN USED TO FEED THE ANIMALS. RECENTLY SHE HAS CREATED A PROJECT CALLED "THE FARM," AN ARTISTIC, SOCIAL, COMMUNAL PROJECT IN THE CITY.

LINDA MONTANO, AFTER SPENDING TWO YEARS IN A CONVENT, MOVED TO SAN FRANCISCO IN 1971. SHE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SELF-DISCIPLINES, USING DIFFERENT ROLES. IN ORDER TO EXPLORE ROLES SHE HAS WORKED IN REAL LIFE AS A SALVATION ARMY LADY WITH A BELL AT CHRISTMAS, AN ACUPUNCTURIST, A MASSEUSE, A CITY GUIDE. BECAUSE OF THE HOLY TRINITY, THE NUMBER THREE HAS A SIGNIFICANCE TO HER. SHE HAS PRODUCED ACTIONS OF LONG ENDURANCE: BLINDFOLDED FOR THREE DAYS; HANDCUFFED TO THIS REPORTER FOR THREE DAYS; WALKING ON A TREADMILL FOR THREE HOURS.

LOS ANGELES

IN THE 50's THERE WAS NO ART SCENE IN L.A. AT ALL. NOT UNTIL ABOUT '64 OR '65 DID L.A. BECOME KNOWN AS AN ART CENTER, BUT AT THAT TIME IT BECAME THE ONLY OTHER ONE IN THE WORLD BESIDES NEW YORK. IT BURNED FAST AND EXTINGUISHED ITSELF IN TEN YEARS. NOW THE MOST IMPORTANT ARTIST OF THAT TIME, LARRY BELL, HAS MOVED TO NEW MEXICO, AND THE MOST IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM, JOHN COPLANS AND IRVING BLUM, HAVE MOVED TO NEW YORK.

FOR ME THE REALLY PURE LOS ANGELES ART STARTS WITH LARRY BELL. BELL, ORIGINALLY A PAINTER, EVOLVED IN A SHORT TIME AND AT A RELATIVELY EARLY AGE BECAME A MAJOR ARTIST RESPONSIBLE FOR A LOS ANGELES AESTHETIC BASED ON THE USE OF LIGHT AS SUBJECT MATTER. BELL'S VACUUM-COATED GLASS BOXES POSITIONED ON CLEAR PLASTIC PEDESTALS ALLOWED THE LIGHT TO ENTER THE CUBE FROM ALL ITS SIX SIDES AND BE TRANSMITTED TO THE VIEWER THROUGH THE WORK, LIKE TELEVISION, THE BOX IN EVERYONE'S LIVING ROOM, A FASCINATING JEWEL FROM WHICH THE LIGHT COMES OUT. LARRY BELL'S BOXES WERE POETIC RECORDS OF THE OPEN SUNSHINE ENVIRONMENT OF LOS ANGELES. BY 1969 HIS WORKS WERE FREE-STANDING PANELS OF COATED REFLECTIVE GLASS. HE HAS JUST BUILT A GLASS ICEBERG WITH ITS OWN GLASS SHADOW.

ROBERT IRWIN, A PAINTER WHO WAS WORKING WITH LIGHT AT THE SAME TIME HAD FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE PAINTINGS THAT HE WOULD HAVE CONTROL OVER IN EVERY INSTALLATION SITUATION. THE PAINTING INCLUDED ITS OWN ROOM AND LIGHTS AS PART OF ITSELF, LIKE A PORTABLE SHRINE. A CONVEX DISC WAS SET OUT FROM ONE WALL OF THE THREE-SIDED ROOM, WITH FOUR SPOTLIGHTS PROJECTING LIGHT FROM THE CORNERS, SO THAT THE CAST SHADOWS BECAME MARRIED WITH THE DISC, MAKING A PERFECT ILLUSION. THE IMAGES OF SHADOWS AND DISC ALL SEEMED ON THE SAME FLOATING PLANE.

LATER IRWIN STRETCHED NYLON CLOTH IN ROOMS HORIZONTALLY OR VERTICALLY TO DIFFUSE THE LIGHT, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF A SOFTER WORLD ON THE OTHER SIDE. OVER THE YEARS, HIS WORK HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE INVISIBLE TO THE POINT THAT NOW HIS SUBTLE CHANGES TO THE LIGHT IN THE SPACE ARE OFTEN MISSED BY THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY IF THEY

HAVE NOT SEEN THE SPACE BEFORE. HIS VERBAL INTELLECTUALIZATION OF HIS ALMOST INVISIBLE WORK HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THESE SITUATIONS.

IN 1967 DOUG WHEELER AND JIM TURREL HAD A SHOW IN THE PASADENA ART MUSEUM. THESE TWO ARTISTS AT THAT TIME REPRESENTED A NEW GENERATION OF ARTISTS WORKING WITH LIGHT AS A MEDIUM. AN INTERESTING THING ABOUT THE PHENOMENON WAS THAT NEITHER ARTIST WAS AWARE OF THE OTHER'S EXISTENCE BEFORE THAT SHOW.

WHEELER WAS USING LIGHT AS SCULPTURE, AND TURREL AS PAINTING. WHEELER WAS THE FIRST ARTIST TO BUILD LIGHT ENVIRONMENTS: ACTUAL SPACE YOU COULD ENTER AND EXPERIENCE THE TOTAL EFFECT OF THE LIGHT AS SCULPTURE MATERIAL. TURREL PROJECTED LIGHT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE IT FRONTAL, TWO-DIMENSIONAL. HIS WORK DEALT WITH COLOR, AND BY COMPARISON TO WHEELER'S SPACES, SEEMED DECORATIVE. WHEELER, ORIGINALLY INFLUENCED BY BELL AND IRWIN, IN TURN INFLUENCED THEM TO WORK MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY.

RECENTLY IN A SHOW IN ITALY WHEELER BUILT A ROOM ROUNDING ALL EDGES AND CORNERS, MAKING A SEAMLESS WHITE SPACE. THE INDIRECT LIGHTING WAS CONTROLLED WITH AN AUTOMATIC RHEOSTAT GRADUALLY TURNING THE LIGHTS UP TO FULL BRIGHTNESS OVER A SIX-MINUTE PERIOD. LATER HE HEARD SOME PEOPLE OUTSIDE INSISTING THE PIECE WAS DEPRESSING, OTHERS SAYING IT WAS UPLIFTING. MOST OF THE PUBLIC WAS TOO IMPATIENT TO STAY IN THE SPACE LONG ENOUGH TO DISCOVER THE GRADUAL LIGHT CHANGE.

MICHAEL ASHER BEGAN EXPERIMENTING WITH INVISIBLE AIR CURRENTS, AND LATER DESIGNED ENVIRONMENTS. IN '71 HE BUILT TWO TRIANGULAR SPACES OUT OF THE ENTRANCE FOYER AND THE GALLERY AT POMONA COLLEGE, SO THE POINT WHERE THE TWO TRIANGLES CAME TOGETHER WAS A SMALL PASSAGEWAY WIDE ENOUGH FOR A PERSON TO PASS THROUGH. THIS CREATED A DIFFUSION OF LIGHT THAT GRADUATED ITSELF FROM WHITE TO BLACK. HE HAS PAINTED TWO SURFACES (FLOOR AND ONE WALL) IN A WHITE ROOM BLACK TO CREATE A LOPSIDED EFFECT. HE SANDBLASTED THE TOSELLI GALLERY IN MILAN DOWN TO ITS ORIGINAL CENTURY-OLD CONDITION, MAKING IT A BRAND (ASHER) NEW SPACE.

BRUCE NAUMAN IS PROBABLY THE MOST WELL-KNOWN ARTIST IN CALIFORNIA. IN '66 WHILE A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IN DAVIS (HE WAS A STUDENT OF WM. T. WILEY), HE USED HIS BODY AS A MATERIAL TO CREATE A FOUNTAIN, SQUIRTING WATER OUT OF HIS MOUTH. HE BEGAN MAKING OBJECTS OUT OF MATERIALS LIKE RUBBER AND FLOUR AT A TIME WHEN CLEAN MINIMALISM WAS AT ITS HEIGHT. HE WAS THE FIRST SCULPTOR TO USE VIDEO AND HOLOGRAPHY.

AFTER HE MOVED TO L.A. HIS WORK BECAME VERY CLEAN AND SINCE ABOUT 1970 HE HAS BEEN MAKING ROOMS, AMONG OTHER THINGS. HIS ROOMS CREATE A STRONG PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON THEIR VIEWERS. HE MADE A PASSAGEWAY LIGHTED WITH GREEN FLUORESCENT LIGHT, SO THAT WHEN YOU PASSED THROUGH THE NARROW SPACE AND ENTERED THE GALLERY, EVERYTHING THERE APPEARED TO BE BRIGHT RED, THE COMPLEMENTARY COLOR. HE BUILT A ROOM WITH A TAPED DIALOGUE TELLING THE VIEWER TO GET OUT OF HIS MIND, GET OUT OF HIS ROOM. HIS EARLY VIDEO PIECES CREATED PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATIONS FOR THE VIEWER, AS YOU SAW YOURSELF FROM BEHIND, AND UPSIDE DOWN. THIS REVEALED THE NATURE OF THAT MEDIUM.

BESIDES THE ARTISTS WHO WORK WITH LIGHT AND SPACE IN L.A., THERE ARE ALSO ARTISTS RECORDING THEIR ENVIRONMENT IN A LITERAL, STORY-TELLING WAY. EDWARD KEINHOLTZ BUILT "TABLEAUS" IN THE EARLY '60s. ED RUSCHA WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST VISUAL ARTIST TO MAKE BOOKS AS SINGLE ART WORKS. HE MAKES RECORD-KEEPING BOOKS OF PHOTOS OF THE BUILDINGS ON SUNSET BOULEVARD, OF GAS STATIONS, OF SWIMMING POOLS. RUSCHA IS A REALIST ARTIST. HIS INTEREST IN ILLUSION IS SHOWN BY HIS PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS AND PRINTS OF WORDS, USING LETTERS THAT HAVE THE LOOK OF THE MATERIAL OF THE WORD, LIKE "WATER" WRITTEN IN GLISTENING DROP-LETS.

ALLEN RUPPERSBERG SINCE 1970 HAS BEEN TELLING STORIES ON POSTCARDS WITH PICTURES OF HIMSELF DRESSED AS MOVIE-TYPE CHARACTERS. IN 1971 HE DID A WORK CALLED "GRAND HOTEL," A REAL HOTEL IN WHICH RUPPERSBERG HAD BUILT SEVERAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT CREATED A NEW STORY IN EACH ROOM. THE PUBLIC COULD STAY IN THESE ROOMS FOR FROM THIRTY DOLLARS A NIGHT AND EXPERIENCE THE WORK IN A DIRECT WAY. HE WROTE "THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY" BY OSCAR WILDE ON SEVERAL CANVASES, AND

TOLD THE STORY OF HARRY HOUDINI WHILE IN A STRAIGHT JACKET TO A VIDEO CAMERA. ALL OF THESE WORKS SHOW THE DIRECT INFLUENCE OF THE MOVIE INDUSTRY, AN ASPECT OF THE LOS ANGELES ENVIRONMENT THAT REACHES THE ENTIRE WORLD.

CHRIS BURDEN WAS A STUDENT OF BOB IRWIN'S IN 1970, AND AT THAT TIME HE BEGAN MAKING TRIPS TO SAN FRANCISCO TO CHECK OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON, AND BECAME INFLUENCED BY THE ACTIVITY OF THE CONCEPTUAL ARTISTS HERE. WHILE HE WAS STILL A STUDENT, BURDEN WAS MAKING ACTIONS AND CREATING SITUATIONS THAT WERE DANGEROUS TO HIMSELF. THESE SITUATIONS CREATED AN ENERGY AROUND HIMSELF. LOCKING HIMSELF INSIDE HIS SCHOOL LOCKER FOR FIVE DAYS FOR HIS GRADUATE PROJECT WAS A PHYSICAL COMMITMENT TO HIS ART THAT WAS A STRONG STATEMENT.

IN '72 HE HAD HIMSELF SHOT WITH A 22-CALIBER RIFLE IN AN ART GALLERY RUN BY SEVERAL ARTISTS IN SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA. THE BULLET MADE A FLESH WOUND AND LEFT A MARK ON HIS ARM: THE SCARS OF HIS ACTIONS FUNCTION AS GRAPHIC WORKS ON HIS BODY (THE FIELD). ON THE ONE HAND THE WORKS ARE SENSATIONALISM, PUBLICITY STUNTS. HE IS REFERRED TO BY SOME IN EUROPE AS A "PUBLICIST." BUT ON THE OTHER HAND THESE ACTIONS ARE THE CONDENSED AND POETIC ACTIONS OF AN ARTIST MIRRORING HIS SOCIETY. HE HAS A SCULPTURAL SENSIBILITY AND IS ABLE TO CREATE A HEIGHTENED ENERGY BECAUSE HE PUTS HIMSELF IN SITUATIONS THAT PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT, E.G., WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

RECENTLY HE HAS BEEN BUILDING A CAR OUT OF NYLON FABRIC STRETCHED OVER A TUBULAR STRUCTURE. IT HAS NO SAFETY FEATURES, BUT IT CAN BE CARRIED IN TWO SUITCASES. HE INTENDS TO DRIVE IT FROM PARIS TO AMSTERDAM, MAKING TWO SHOWS BY ASSEMBLING THE CAR IN A PARIS GALLERY AND DISASSEMBLING IT IN A GALLERY IN AMSTERDAM.

ELEANOR ANTIN LIVES SOUTH OF L.A. NEAR SAN DIEGO. SHE MOVED THERE FROM NEW YORK A FEW YEARS AGO. SHE SENT OUT POSTCARDS WITH PHOTOS OF ONE HUNDRED BOOTS PLACED IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS. EACH MONTH OR SO A DIFFERENT PHOTO WAS SENT OUT, THE BOOTS ALWAYS SUGGESTING FIFTY INVISIBLE PEOPLE IN A NEW SITUATION: ON THE BEACH, IN THE WOODS, ETC. SHE HAS ASSUMED THE ROLE OF CHARACTERS IN PAINTINGS OF THE PAST, LIKE DEGAS' DANCERS, REMBRANDT'S MODELS. RECENTLY SHE HAS CREATED THE ROLE OF A KING WITH PERIOD CLOTHES AND BEARD, AND HAS STARTED TO MAKE APPEAR-

ANCES IN DIFFERENT CITIES IN FRONT OF APPROPRIATE SETTINGS, TELLING STORIES OF THE PAST.

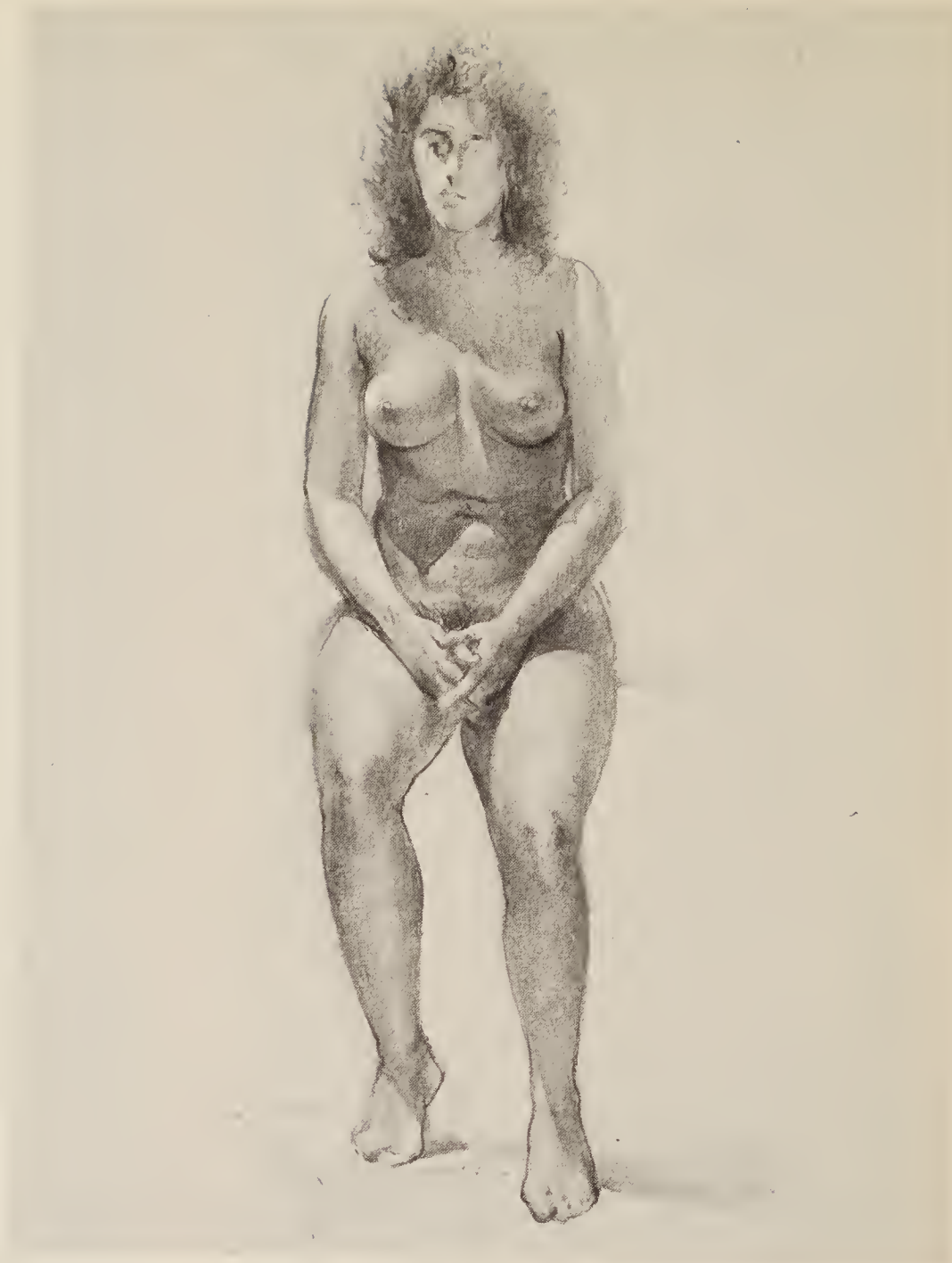
BARBARA SMITH HAS BEEN MAKING ACTIONS SINCE 1971 DEALING WITH CONCERNS OFTEN VERY MUCH IN THE FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS. IN 1973 SHE CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT IN A SHOW CALLED "ALL NIGHT SCULPTURES" AT MOCA. A TAPE WAS PLAYING, "FEED ME, FEED ME" OVER AND OVER IN A ROOM SET UP AS A BOUDOIR, WHILE SHE WAS NAKED ON A BED. THE ROOM HAD INCENSE, OILS TO RUB ON HER BODY, CANDLES BURNING, AND FRESH FRUIT TO EAT. ONE PERSON AT A TIME WAS ALLOWED INTO THE ROOM FROM SUNSET TO SUNRISE. IT WAS A ONE TO ONE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARTICIPANTS THAT INCLUDED LOVE-MAKING. OUTSIDE THE ROOM UNDER A BARE LIGHT BULB GUYS WERE HANGING AROUND SMOKING CIGARETTES, WAITING THEIR TURN TO GO IN THE ROOM. THIS POWERFUL WORK POINTED OUT THE OBVIOUS MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN OUR SOCIETY. RECENTLY BARBARA SMITH PRODUCED AN EVENT IN PASADENA THAT WAS AN AUCTION OF HER ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES WHICH SHE WOULD SHARE WITH THE PURCHASERS.

CHARLES HILL, LIKE ELEANOR ANTIN, TRIES TO RETRIEVE THE PAST. HE SEWS HIS PAINTINGS TOGETHER ON A SEWING MACHINE, THEN BURIES THEM IN THE GROUND TO SPEED UP THEIR AGING PROCESS. THE PAINTINGS LOOK LIKE RELICS FROM THE ANCIENT PAST. IN AN AGE OF SCULPTURE, HE IS PRODUCING SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW IN PAINTING. THE NEW SCULPTORS WORK WITH THE ACTUAL PASSAGE OF TIME, AND HILL, A PAINTER, SPEEDS UP TIME BY PROCESS, WORKS WITH THE ILLUSION OF PASSAGE OF TIME.

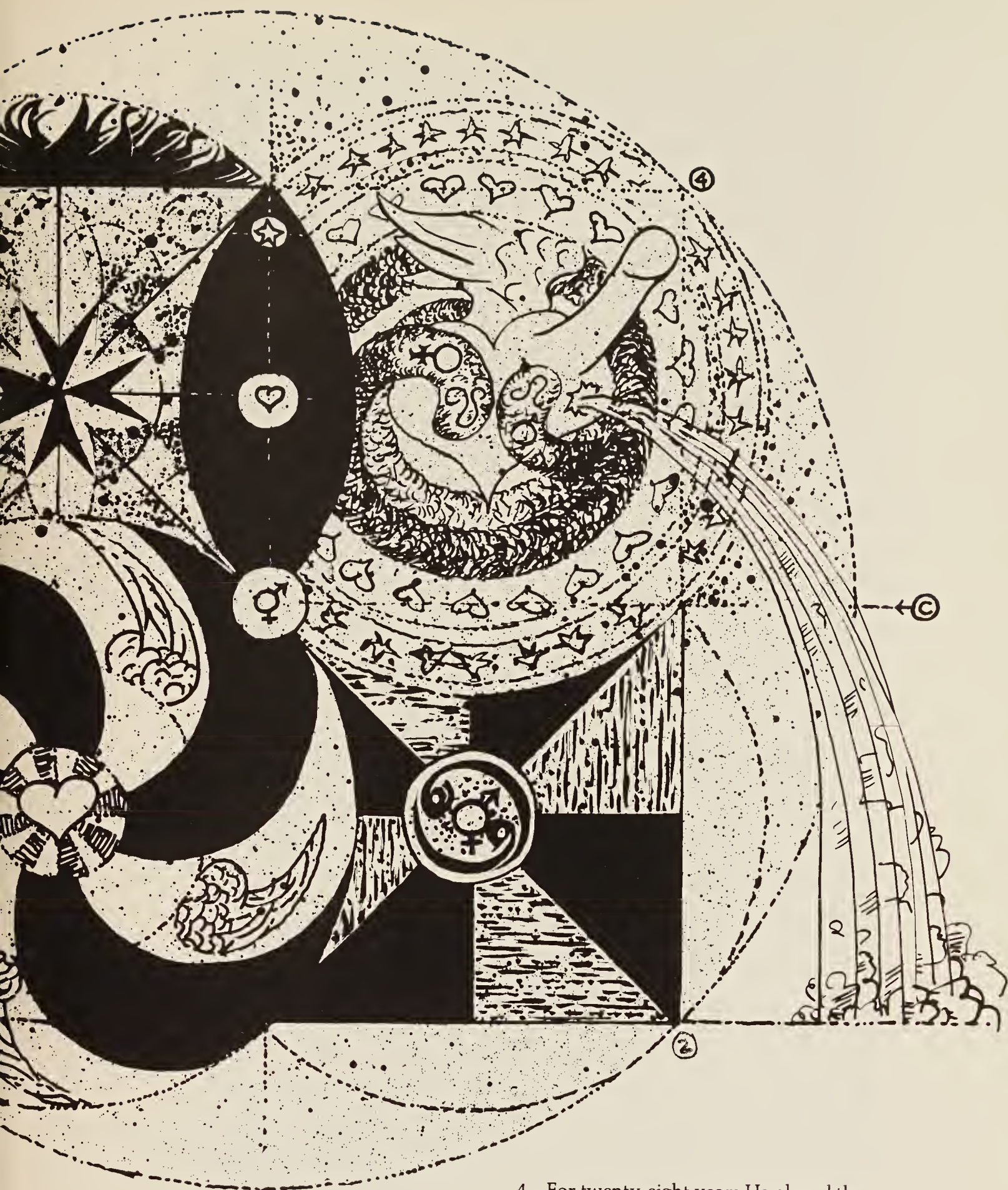
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It is the purpose of *Vision* to make available information about idea-oriented art. It is an artist-oriented publication, presenting works and material only from artists, each issue devoted to a particular region of the world. In this first issue we have included California artists who have had an influence on the region or the world, and have created work that has the character of the region as well as an individual style. This section of the publication functions like an exhibition space where the artists were invited to show whatever they wanted to represent themselves.







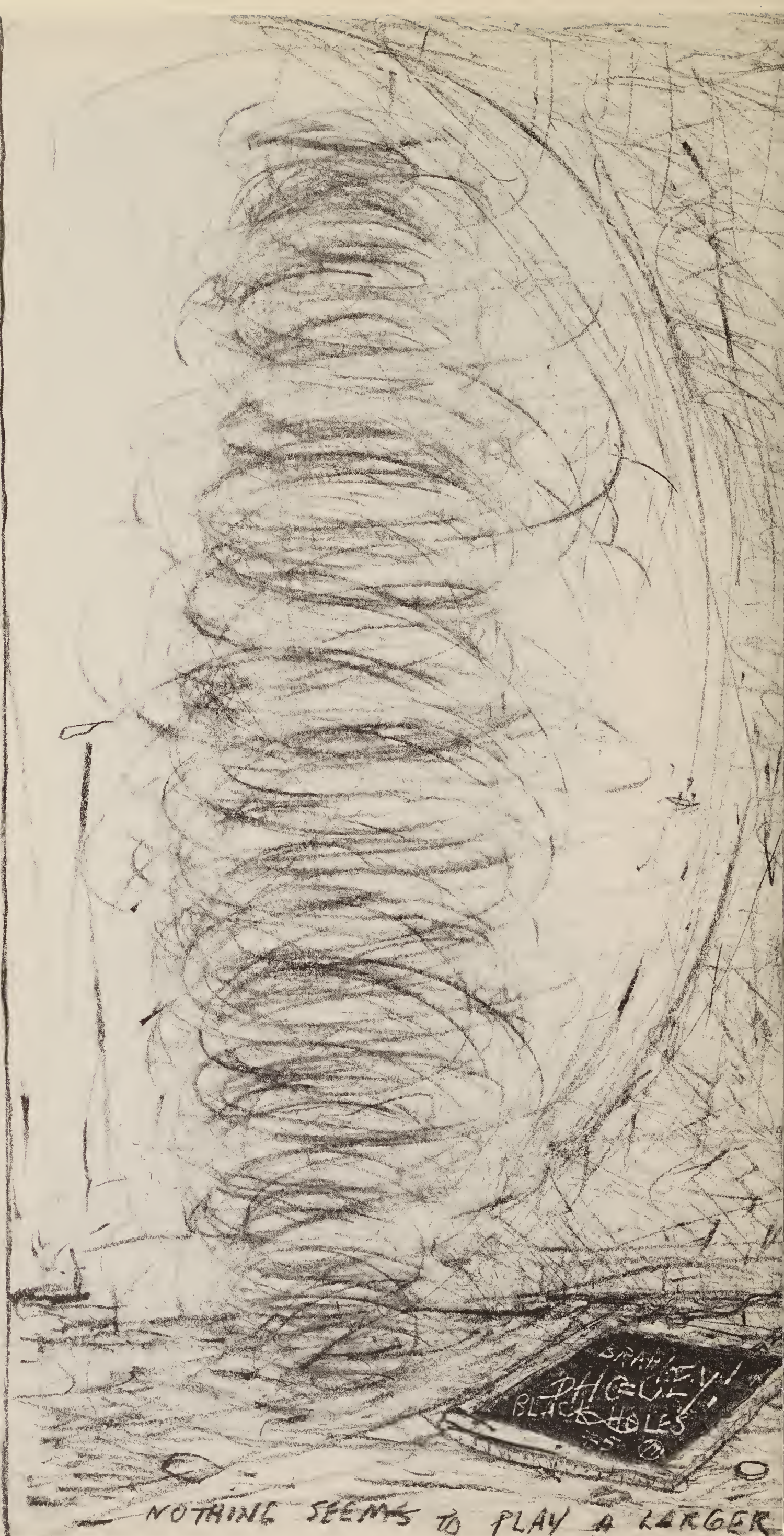


II. History. This is the way God played His instrument.

1. For twenty-eight years He played the song of the Past. The genitals dominate all; they ravage the heart and overwhelm the brain with their lustful arms as a cross of turning fire.
2. For twenty-eight years He played the song of the Here. The heart dominates all; its embrace of never-ending love cares for the ill and solaces those bereaved by the genitalian holocaust.
3. For twenty-eight years he played the song of the Future. The mind dominates all; it is a crystal of shifting facets of the learning of lust and love.
4. For twenty-eight years He played the song of the Beyond. Wholeness comes; the logos rises toward an immortality beyond time, and the eros pours, a living rainbow spring, to water every morrow.
5. And all four songs were but notes in the single chord of destiny which rounds throughout every life.









RT THAN I BEEN



LISTEN, TOO

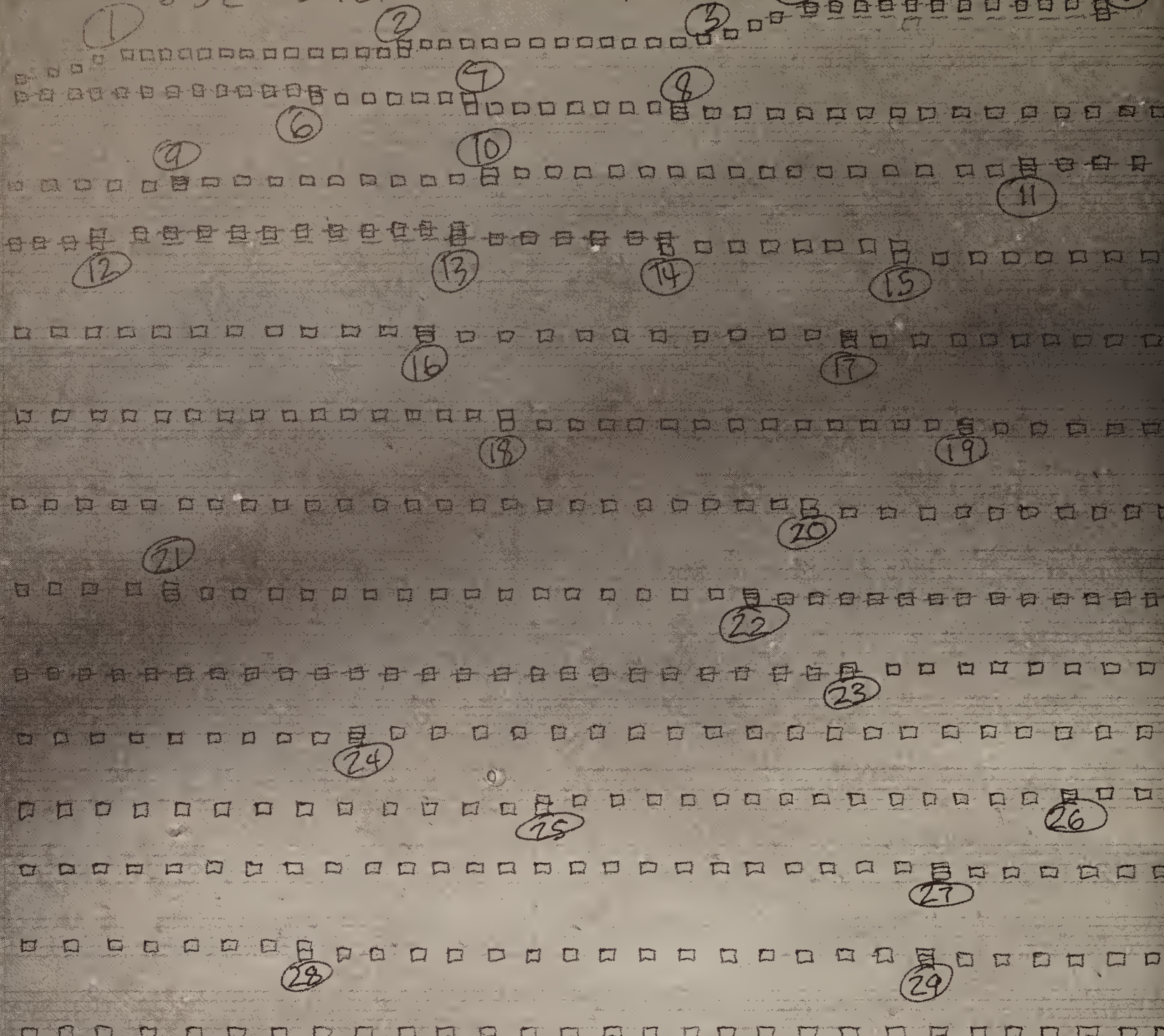


552 STEPS

INTO

THE

5



CENTER (REPEAT) (BACKWARDS)

TIME = LENGTH OF INDIVIDUAL PURRS

□ = ONE FULL CYCLE CATS PURR

○ = TURN



- 1 = 77 (1-39-37)
- 2 = 76 (1-18-19-37-1)
- 3 = 70 (1-16-35-17-1)
- 4 = 64 (1-31-16-15-1)
- 5 = 59 (14-15-29-1)
- 6 = 51 (13-26-12)
- 7 = 46 (1-22-12-11)
- 8 = 42 (1-9-11-20-1)
- 9 = 35 (1-7-18-8-1)
- 10 = 31 (1-14-8-7-1)
- 11 = 25 (12-12-1)

CATS → PURRS → GROUPS OF PURRS

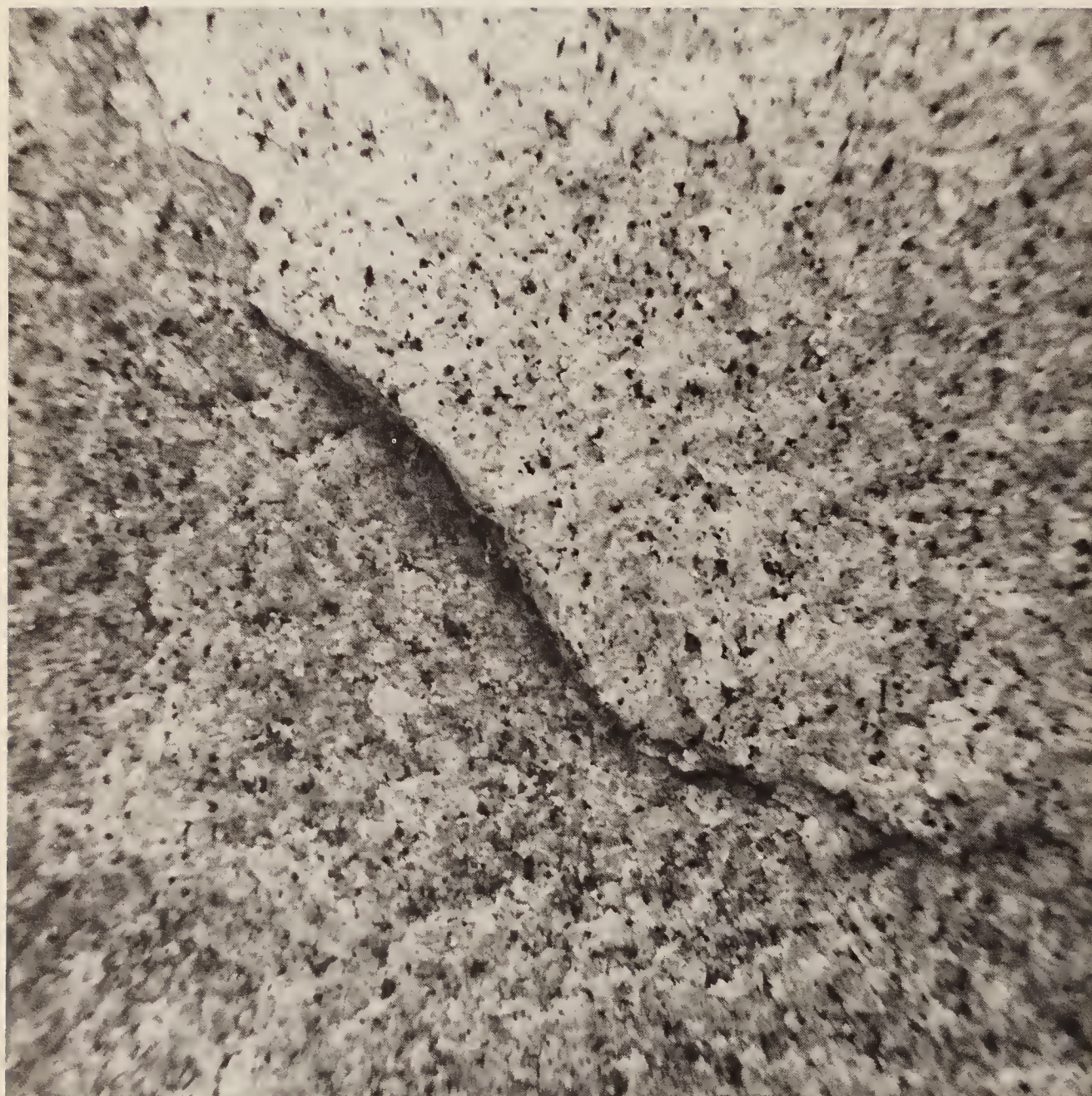
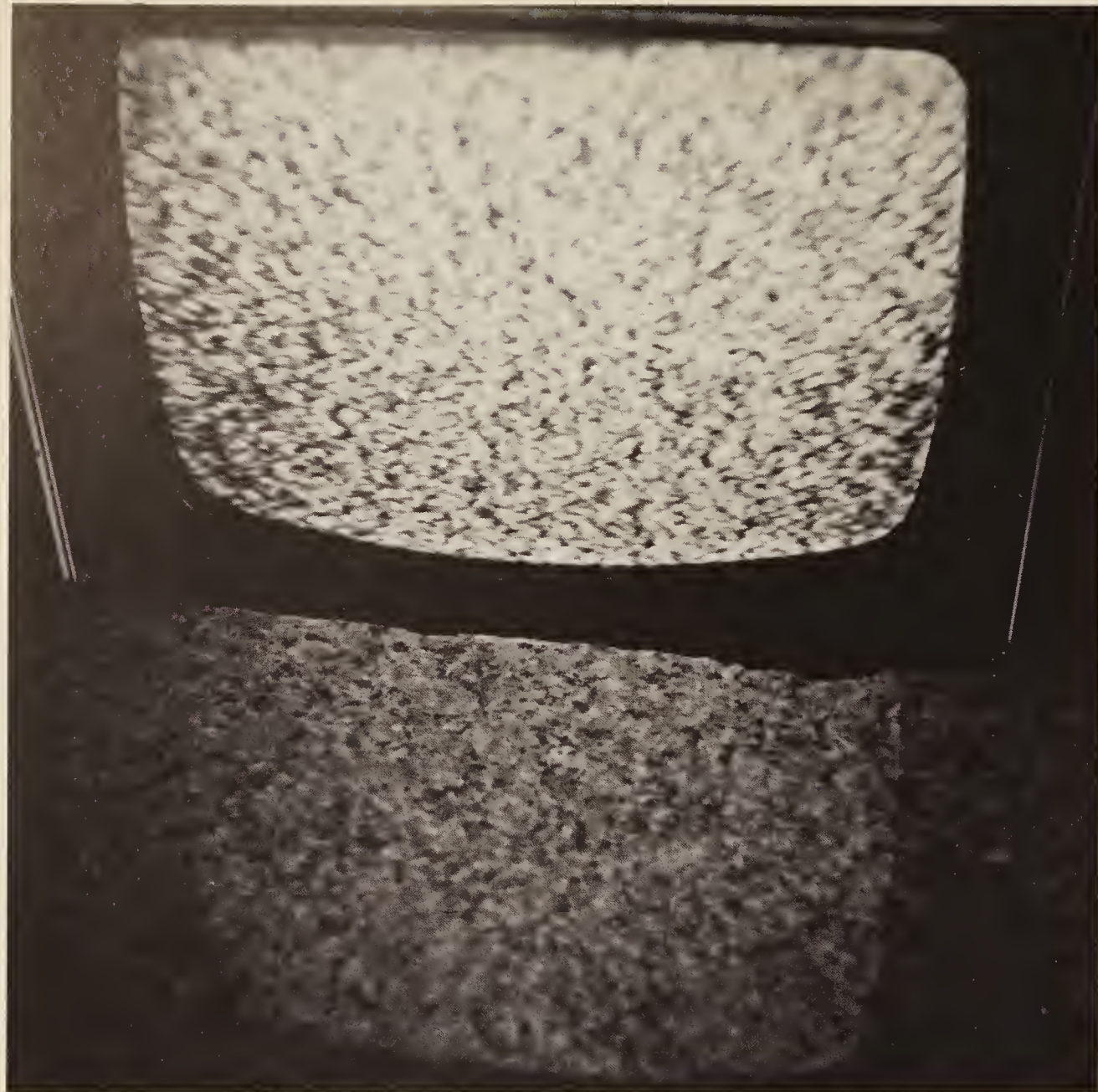
ELEVEN DIFFERENT CATS

LABYRINTH AT CHARTRES CATHEDRAL

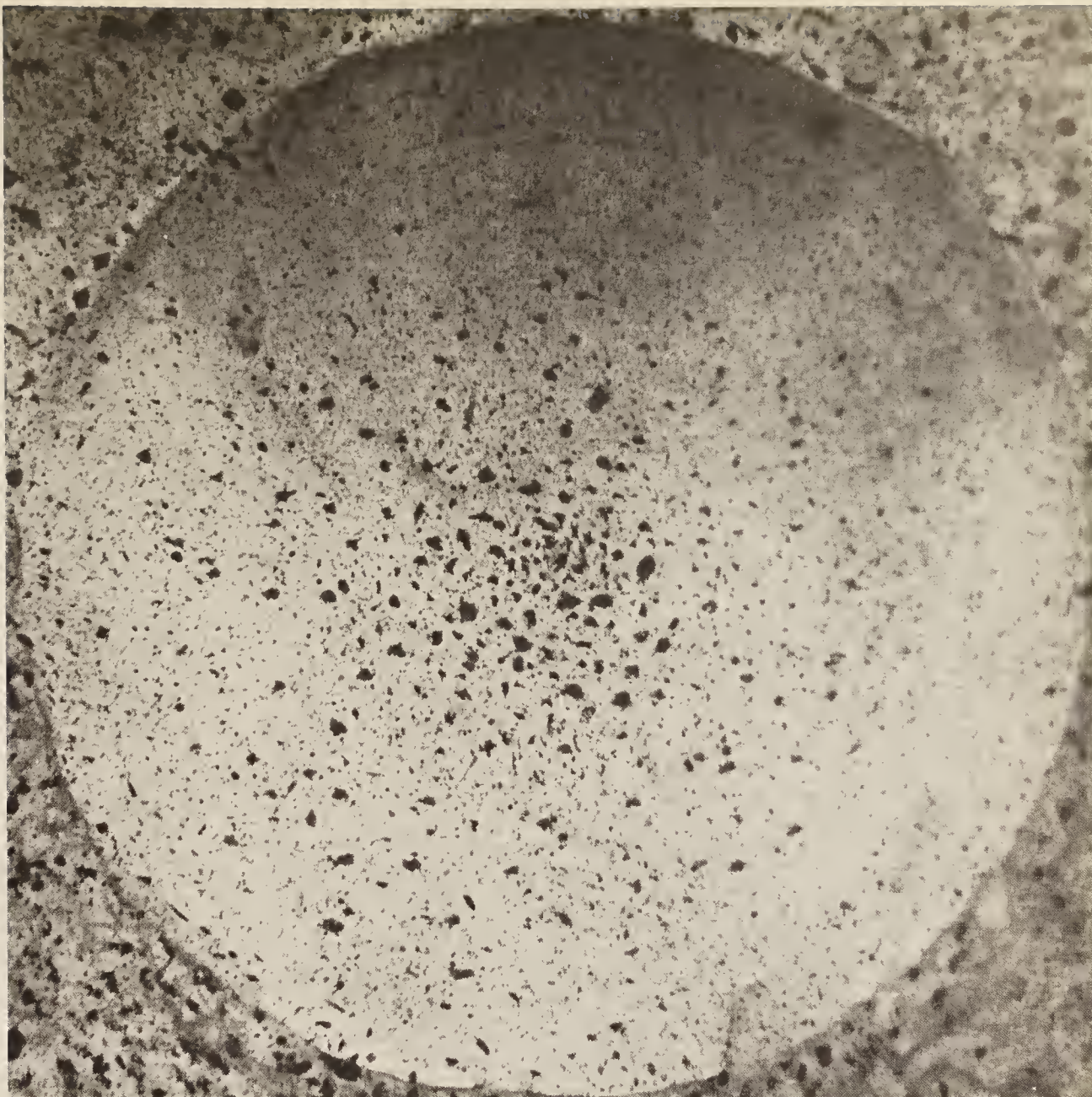


TRIPLE CROSSES : LOOP

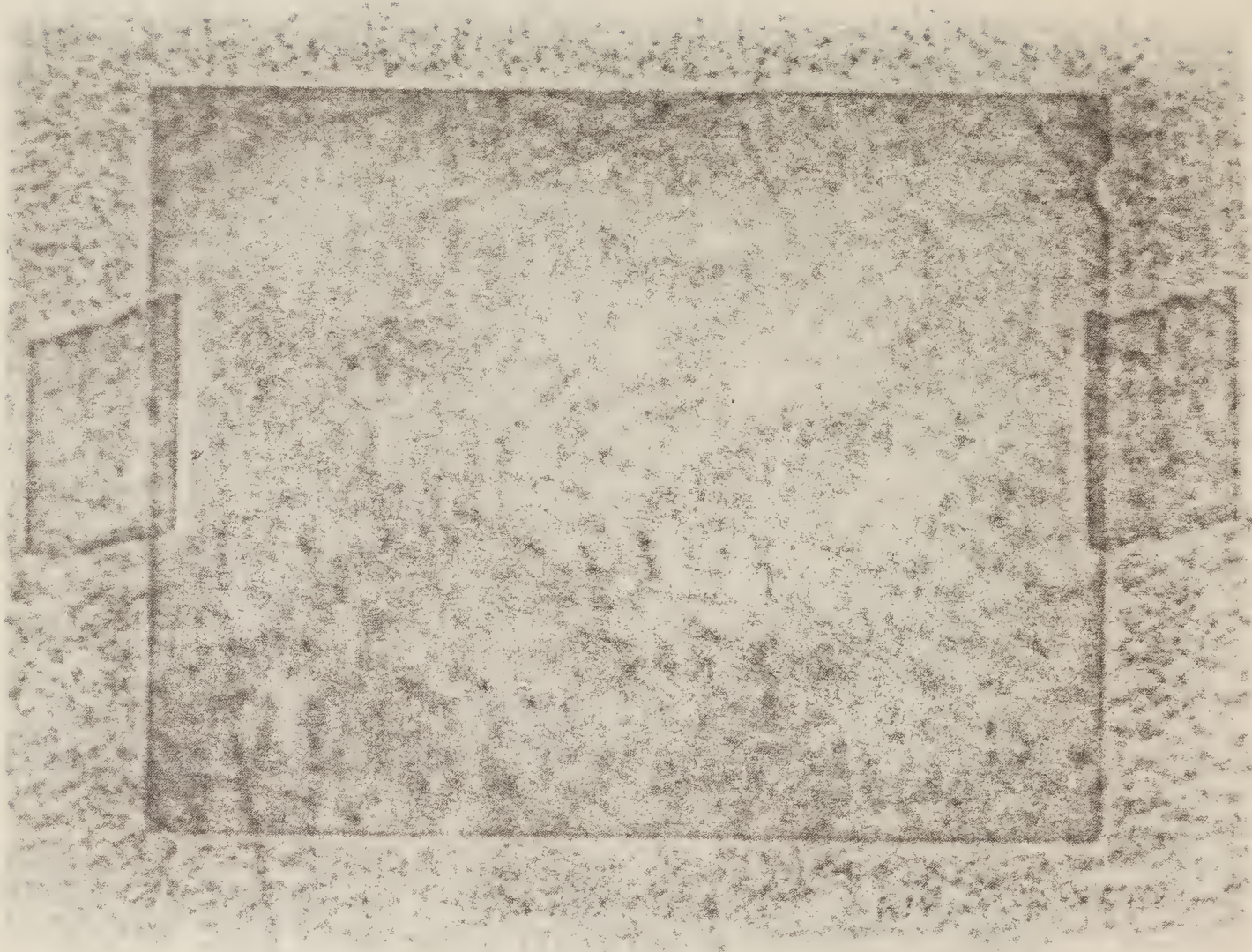
THIS DIAGRAM WAS FORMED BY CHANGING THE 34 TURNS IN THE LABYRINTH INTO RIGHT ANGLES AND MAKING THE DISTANCES BETWEEN THEM EQUAL WHEN JOINED AT THE ENDS AS A LOOP IT FORMS A TRYPTICH OF CONNECTED CROSSES AND CONSIDERING THE TURNS FROM THE CENTER TO THE OUTSIDE AS BEING OPPOSITE TO THOSE ENTERING.



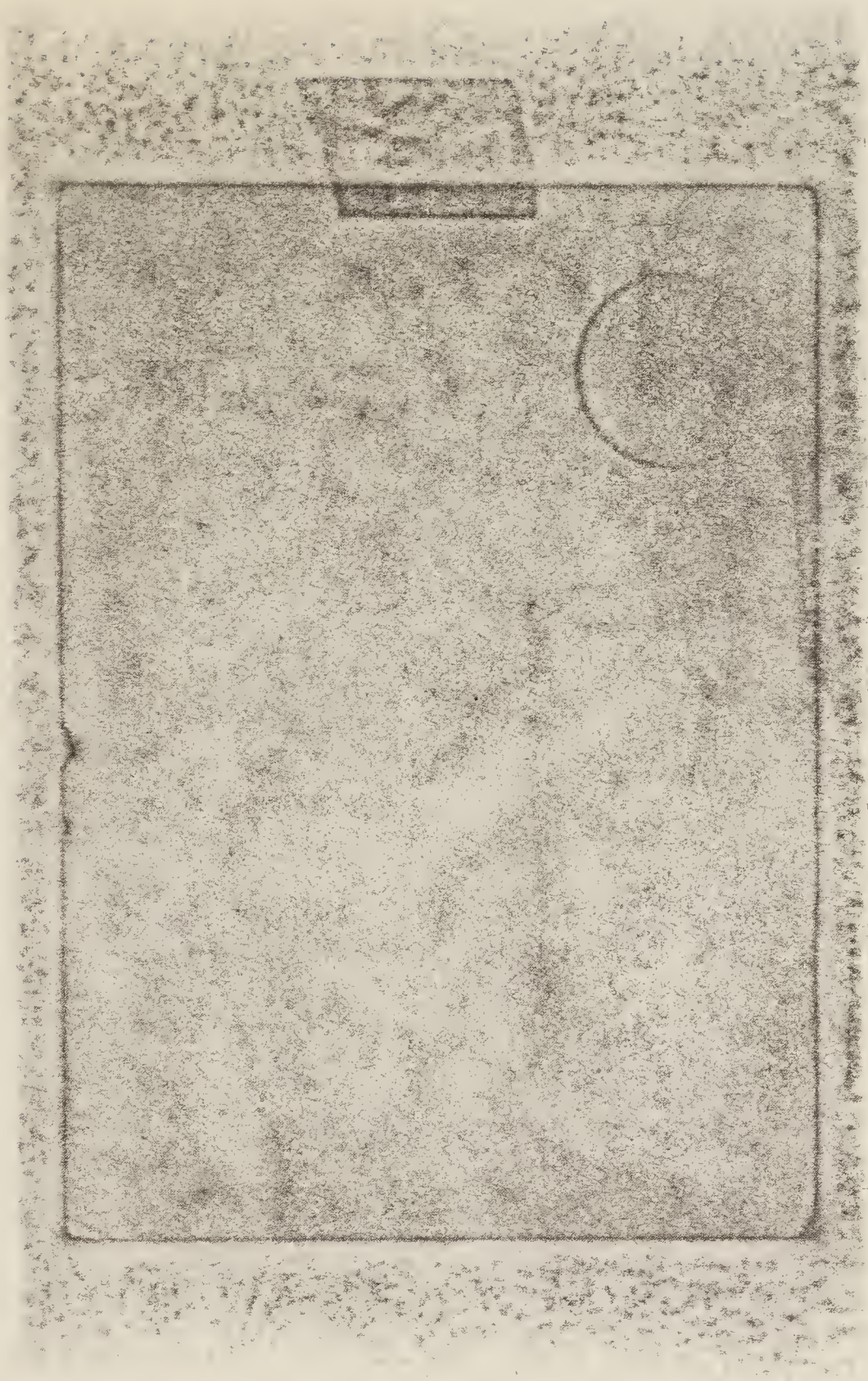
TOP: SNOW AND ROCK
BOTTOM: DIAGONAL HOLD



TOP: DRAWING FOR A TOOL: ICE LENS MAKER
 BOTTOM: SCISSORS CUT PAPER
 ROCK BREAKS SCISSORS
 PAPER COVERS ROCK
ICE MAKES FIRE (ITALICS MINE)
 I KINGS, 17, 40



A snapshot of four people
(with their backs to a peach
tree) touching the backs
of two wooden chairs that
have been brought outdoors
for the occasion.



A picture postcard
(mailed from Japan)
in which camellia bushes
hide the spot from which
we view the lighthouse
on the cliff.



RANDOM HOUSE CONVERTERS

TRANS-PARENT TEACHER'S INK.

PAUL COTTON, MEDIUM

"... For example, the Christian concept of the mystical body—all men as members of the body of Christ—this becomes technologically a fact under electronic conditions."

Marshall McLuhan in
McLuhan: Hot and Cool, p. 261
G. E. Stearn Ed. Signet Books, 1967

The Astral-Naught Earth Work is a Meta-Physical Sculpture-Poem. The Astral-Naught "space suits" or "envelopes" are designed to symbolize and re-establish the innocence of body and mind as seen through the eyes of a child. Each suit incorporates electronic radio, headphones, speaker and third-eye light thus integrating within, and illuminating the existent communications *network*. This *network* is the architectural substructure of "The Temple of the Human Mind" in which the Astral-Naught Rabb-Eyes exist as present-ions⁺ of the Mystical Body of Christ.

"In the electric age, when our central nervous system is technologically extended to involve us in the whole of mankind and to incorporate the whole of mankind in us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the consequences of every action. It is no longer possible to adopt the aloof and dissociated role of the literate Westerner."

Understanding Media
McLuhan, p. 4
McGraw-Hill Book Co.
N.Y. 1964

Eye would like to make a twelve-octave set of Astral-Naught Rabb-Eyes in time for Wester Sun-Day (Easter) Morning, 1976. Each octave would land in a public park in twelve major cities in the U.S. and abroad in a space which would thereafter become legal sanctuary for the nude human body established as the Statute of Liberty. Prospective sites: New York City, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Washington D.C., Toronto, Vancouver, Houston, Boston, Amsterdam, Berne, Paris, Rome, London, Dusseldorf. A Musical Concert could be broadcast to and through the Astral-Naught Instruments from a Satellite focal point.

The "Random House Converters" provide the frames of reference through which to contemplate the Astral-Naughts as living paintings, reflections of yourself beyond the "looking glass." They also point to the literary breakthrough of the Astral-Naughts'

Transparent Teacher's Ink. welcomes any enthusiastic response from people with energy, ideas, desire to participate, etc. Write:

Oz-Moses
Trans-Parent Teacher's Ink.
1801 Woolsey Street
Berkeley, California 94703

embodiment of the "Word Made Flesh." A set of converters should be installed at each landing site.

The ambiance of each site would be a "Kinder-Garden" sanctuary of mutual trust where the "Divine Audience" would be encouraged to take off all clothes and run like children under water sprinklers in a Baptism ceremony. This is a Baptism of light, a form of Communion in the body. The *participation* of the highest spirits amongst us in this rite would

help serve to reconnect body and mind with the innocence of natural existence.

A Bread and Wine ceremony would be followed by group singing, games, entertainment and dancing.

Each of these nodular events should be objectively covered by local and national media. The Astral-Naughts of the world of painting and sculpture are space-time explorers analogous to the Astronauts of the science world. Thoughtful meditation on the information embodied in these forms will initiate a "small step for man, a great leap for mankind."

"Any artistic endeavor includes the preparing of an environment for human attention. A poem or a painting is in every sense a teaching machine for the training of perception and judgment. The artist is a person who is especially aware of the challenge and dangers of new environments presented to human sensibility. Whereas the ordinary person seeks security by numbing his perceptions against the impact of new experience, the artist delights in this novelty and instinctively creates situations which correct the sensory bias and derangement

brought about by the new form. In social terms the artist can be regarded as a navigator who gives adequate compass bearings in spite of magnetic deflection of the needle by the changing play of forces. So understood, the artist is not a peddler of ideals or lofty experiences. He is rather the indispensable aid to action and reflection alike."

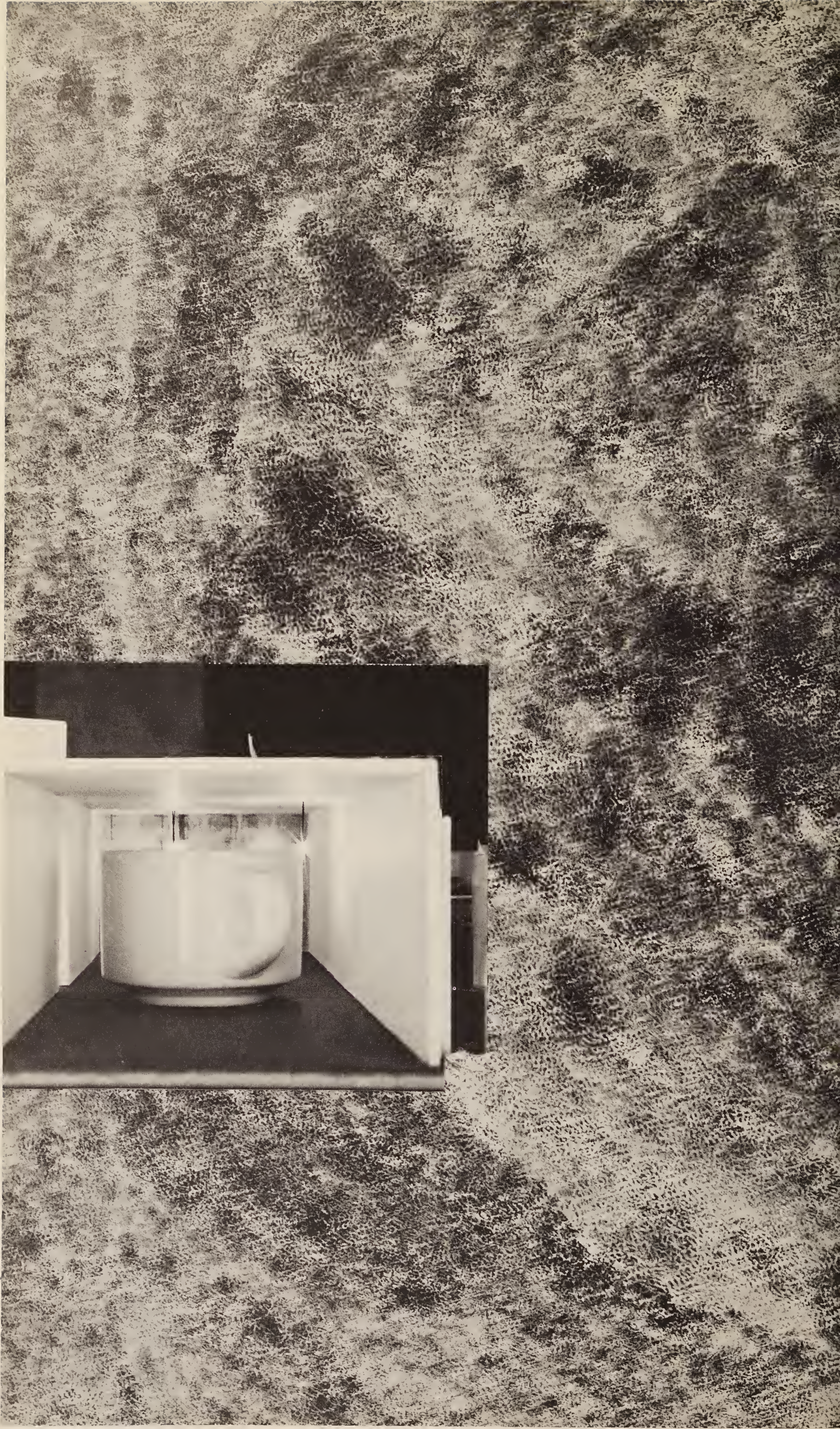
Through the Vanishing Point
McLuhan & Parker, p. 238.

Harper & Row, New York
1965



ASTRAL-NAUGHT RABB-EYES







AKT IN

volume

th

life



addressing the mayor



talking with

LOGIC

two

arm

work



children



changing for myself



Linda Montano Received Habit At Maryknoll

Linda Montano, of St. Mary of the Snow Parish, Saugerties, was one of sixty-two young women who received the Missionary Communities habit at a reception-profession ceremony at the Maryknoll Sisters Motherhouse, Ossining, June 24. Miss Montano is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Montano, 9 John St., Saugerties. She graduated from St. Mary's parochial school, Saugerties High School and attended the College of New Rochelle. Miss Montano received the religious name of Sister Rose Augustine.

Thirteen of the young women who took part in the ceremony were from the Archdiocese of New York. Maryknoll Bishop John W. Gumber presided and the Rt. Reverend Msgr. Henry J. Lenahan, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes, New York City, preached.

Other New Yorkers included in the ceremony were Sisters Thomas Michael, M. Francis Berna-

Page 2
SEC II -

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In addition
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ME SALE, Inc.

TIMMONS

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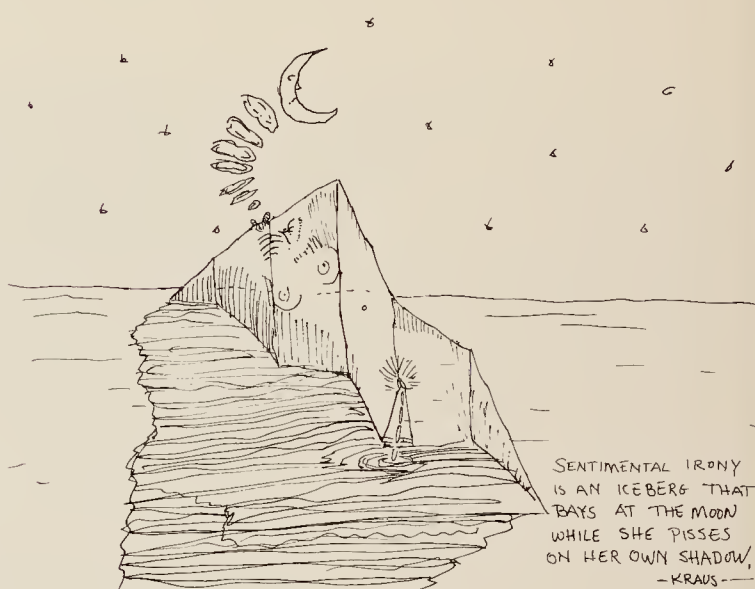
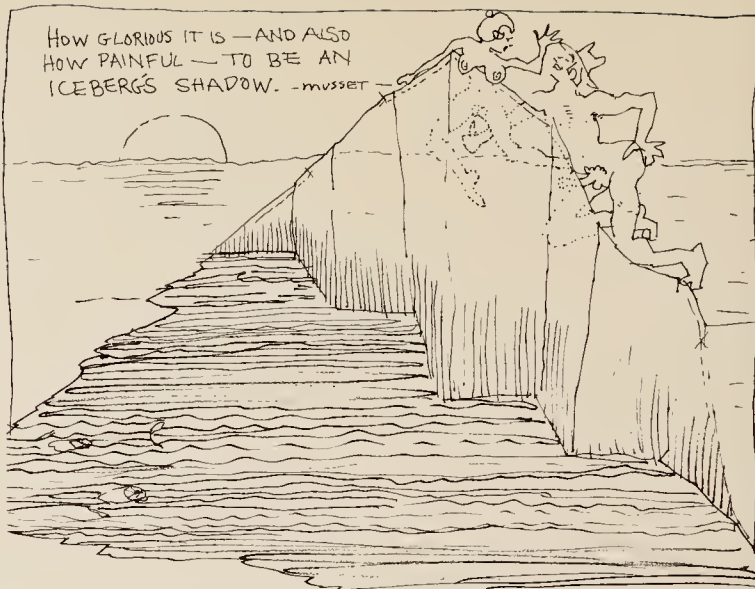
PAL and STAR

BETTER TO
SIT UP ALL
NIGHT THAN
TO GO TO
BED
WITH AN
ICEBERG.

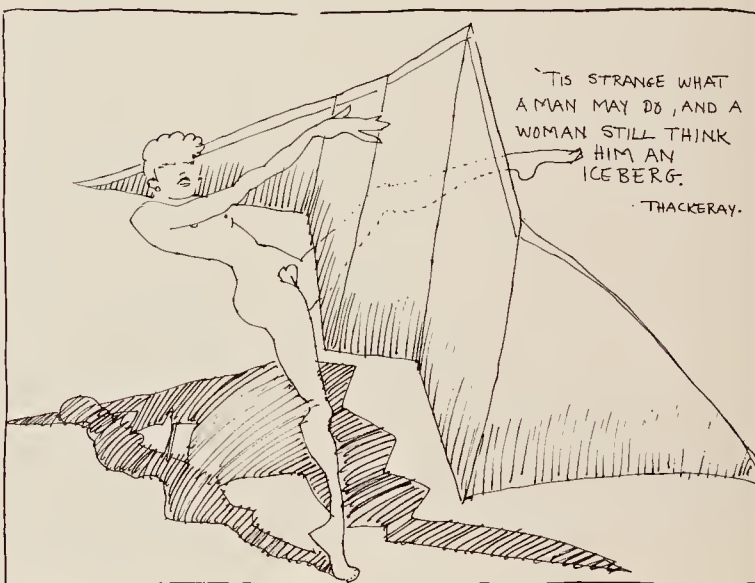
—JEREMY
TAYLOR—



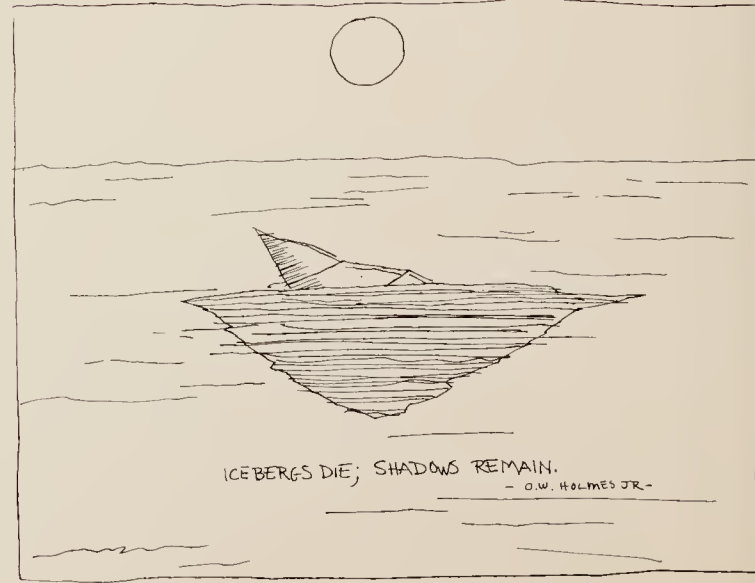
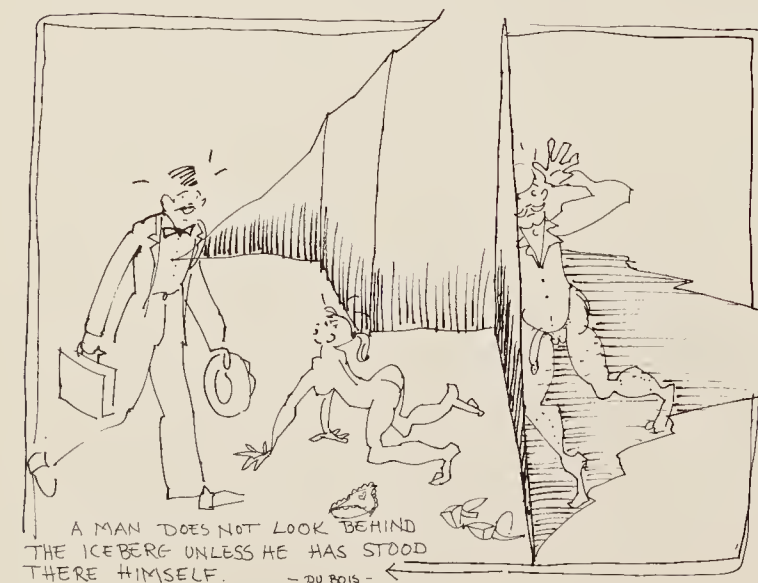
HOW GLORIOUS IT IS — AND ALSO
HOW PAINFUL — TO BE AN
ICEBERG'S SHADOW. —MUSSET—



SENTIMENTAL IRONY
IS AN ICEBERG THAT
BAYS AT THE MOON
WHILE SHE PISSES
ON HER OWN SHADOW.
—KRAUS—



'TIS STRANGE WHAT
A MAN MAY DO, AND A
WOMAN STILL THINK
HIM AN
ICEBERG.
—THACKERAY.



ICEBERGS DIE; SHADOWS REMAIN.
—O.W. HOLMES JR.—

IT ALWAYS STRIKES ME, AND IT IS VERY PECULIAR, THAT, WHENEVER WE SEE THE IMAGE OF INDESCRIBABLE & UNUTTERABLE DESOLATION—OF LONELINESS, POVERTY, AND MISERY, THE END & EXTREME OF THINGS, THE THOUGHT OF THE ICEBERG COMES INTO ONE'S MIND.

VAN GOGH

THERE IS LUXURY IN ICEBERGS.

WILDE

NEVER TO TALK ABOUT THE ICEBERG IS A VERY REFINED FORM OF HYPOCRISY.

NIETZSCHE

AN ICEBERG CANNOT BLUSH.

ASCRIBED TO HOWEL WALSH

THE ICEBERG ITSELF MAY BE HAPPY CHANCE.

WHITEHEAD

IN PERIODS OF DECADENCE ONLY THE VERY INDEPENDENT ICEBERGS HAVE A CHANCE TO SURVIVE.

DELACROIX

TODAY'S ICEBERG IS TOMORROW'S CAKE.

DR. R. I. BELL

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT IS A DISEASE THAT AFFLICTS ICEBERGS.

CHESTERMAN

ICEBERGS BOIL AT DIFFERENT DEGREES.

EMERSON

THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND THE SHADOW, THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND THE ICEBERG.

EMERSON

WE ARE ICEBERGS OF OUR OWN AGE, BUT ICEBERGS WHO CAN NEVER KNOW THEIR SHADOWS.

L. P. SMITH

ICEBERG IS THE MOTHER OF SHADOW.

CHESTERTON

THERE IS NO FURY LIKE AN ICEBERG SEARCHING FOR A NEW SHADOW.

CONNOLLY

THE MOST VULNERABLE AND AT THE SAME TIME THE MOST UNCONQUERABLE THING IS THE ICEBERG; INDEED, IT IS THROUGH BEING FROZEN THAT ITS POWER GROWS AND CAN, IN THE END, BECOME TREMENDOUS.

NIETZSCHE

IF YOU THINK YOU LOVE YOUR ICEBERG FOR HER OWN SAKE, YOU ARE QUITE MISTAKEN.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

THE SHADOW ALWAYS BELIEVES THE ICEBERG LIVES FOR IT.

LICHTENBERG

THERE MAY BE ICEBERGS WHO SET FIRE TO THE TEMPLES IN WHICH THEIR IMAGE IS WORSHIPED.

NIETZSCHE

IF THE ICEBERG HAD EVERYTHING HER OWN WAY SHE WOULD BE AS INSUFFERABLE AS DOMINANT FRACTURES GENERALLY ARE.

SAMUEL BUTLER (II)

NOTHING IS MORE UNPLEASANT THAN A VIRTUOUS ICEBERG WITH A MEAN SHADOW.

BAGEHOT

EVERY ICEBERG HAS A SECRET AMBITION TO TERRORIZE.

LEC

ICEBERGS ARE TOO OFTEN MERELY LOCAL.

DR. JOHNSON

THE MAJORITY OF ICEBERGS REMIND ME OF AN ORANG-UTAN TRYING TO PLAY THE VIOLIN.

BALZAC

ALWAYS MISTRUST A SHADOW WHO NEVER FINDS FAULT WITH HIS ICEBERG.

COLLINS

THE ICEBERG SPEAKS ALL SORTS OF LANGUAGES AND PLAYS ALL SORTS OF ROLES, EVEN THAT OF DISINTERESTEDNESS.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

IN ANALYZING THE ICEBERGS, DO NOT BE TOO PROFOUND, FOR OFTEN THE CAUSES ARE QUITE SUPERFICIAL.

EMERSON

THE CREDULITY OF AN ICEBERG IS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE OF AUTHORITY.

FREUD

LET NOT THY ICEBERG ROAR, WHEN THY SHADOW CAN BUT WHISPER.

DR. FULLER

AN ICEBERG WHO COULD NOT SEDUCE ICEBERGS CANNOT SAVE THEM EITHER.

KIERKEGAARD

EVERY ICEBERG LIKES THE SMELL OF ITS OWN SHADOW.

ICELANDIC PROVERB

AN ICEBERG TOO GOOD FOR THE WORLD IS NO GOOD FOR HIS SHADOW.

YIDDISH PROVERB

A SPOILED ICEBERG NEVER LOSES ITS SHADOW.

SIR HENRY TAYLOR

DON'T ASK THE ICEBERG, ASK THE SHADOW.

YIDDISH PROVERB

ICEBERGS, I SUPPOSE, WERE SHADOWS ONCE.

LAMP

ICEBERGS INSPIRE US TO GREAT THINGS, AND PREVENT US FROM ACHIEVING THEM.

DUMAS

CAN YOU RECALL AN ICEBERG WHO EVER SHOWED YOU WITH PRIDE HER SHADOW?

DE CASSERTS

A BEAUTIFUL ICEBERG SHOULD BREAK HER MIRROR EARLY.

GRACIAN

NATURE HAS GIVEN ICEBERGS SO MUCH POWER THAT THE LAW HAS VERY WISELY GIVEN THEM LITTLE.

DR. JOHNSON

IT IS BECAUSE OF SHADOWS THAT ICEBERGS DISLIKE ONE ANOTHER.

LA BRUYERE

THE SHADOW THROWS NO LIGHT UPON THE ICEBERG, BUT ONLY THROUGH THE ICEBERG CAN WE LEARN HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE SHADOW.

ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY

A TASTE FOR DIRTY STORIES MAY BE SAID TO BE INHERENT IN THE ICEBERG.

GEORGE MOORE

IF YOU ARE AFRAID OF SHADOWS, DON'T ICEBERG.

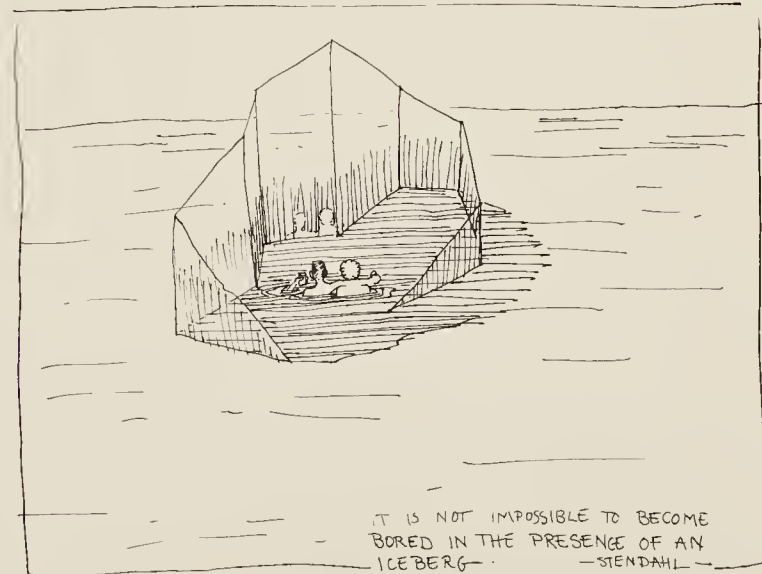
CHEKHOV

NONE THINK THE ICEBERG UNHAPPY BUT THE ICEBERG.

YOUNG

ICEBERGS LOSE THEIR TEMPERS IN DEFENDING THEIR SHADOWS.

EMERSON



ILLUSTRATIONS, JAN WEBB

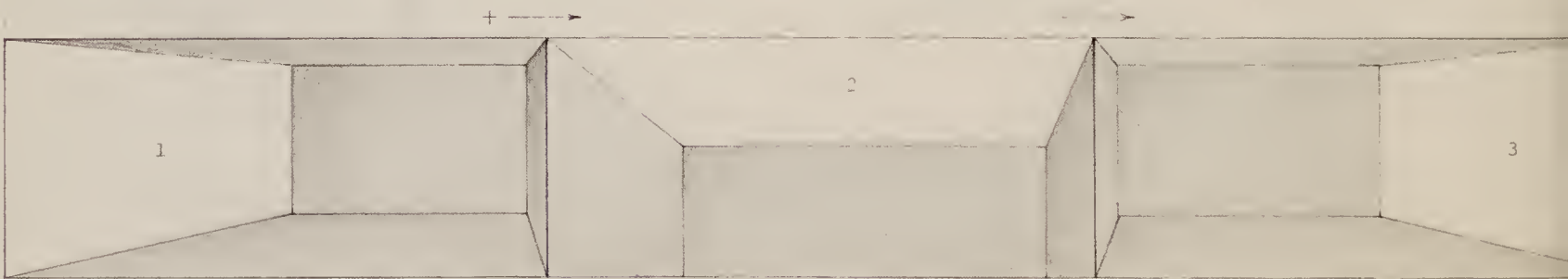
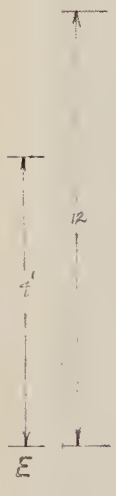
TWENTY QUESTIONS

,

1. CAN THE INCIDENTAL EVER BE HELD THE EQUAL OF MEANINGFUL?
2. DOES ART EXIST WITHOUT PERFORMANCE?
3. IS EFFECT A REAL MEASURE FOR ART?
4. WHAT WOULD BE THE DISTINCTIONS FOR ART AS AN ACT OF INQUIRY?
5. IF MEANING AND CULTURE ARE CAUSALLY CONNECTED, AND PHENOMENA AND PERCEPTION ARE CAUSALLY CONNECTED, COULD PERCEPTION AND CULTURE BE ACAUSALLY CONNECTED?
6. COULD IT FOLLOW THAT PHENOMENA AND CULTURE HAVE "MEANINGFUL COINCIDENCES"?
7. WOULD AN INQUIRY OF PERCEPTION THEN HAVE CULTURAL MEANING ACAUSALLY?
8. IS MEASUREABLE MEANING THE PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CAUSAL AND ACAUSAL CONNECTINGS?
9. THEN WHAT IS THE MEASURE FOR AN AESTHETIC AWARENESS?
10. CAN MORALITY, FOR EXAMPLE, BE HELD AS A MEASURE FOR ART?
11. BUT WHAT PHENOMENA HAS NO AESTHETIC POTENTIAL?
12. AND WHAT IS THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ELITISM AND OBSCURITY?
13. IS THERE AN AESTHETIC IDEAL?
14. THEN WHAT WOULD BE THE IDEAL MEASURE FOR POTENTIAL?
15. COULD ART BE MORE CLEARLY DEFINED BY DRAWING ITS DISTINCTIONS IN OUR INTENTIONS?
16. WAS THE DISTINCTION OF A NONOBJECTIVE ART AN INQUIRY FOR A NON-METAPHORICAL THOUGHT FORM?
17. AND CAN NONOBJECTIVE NOW BE TRANSLATED NON OBJECT?
18. THEN WOULD NONOBJECTIVE ART BE AN INQUIRY INTO THE STRUCTURE OF PERCEPTION?
19. AND WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS INQUIRY FOR OUR CULTURAL FORMS?
20. IF THERE WERE ART WITHOUT ARTIFICE, WOULD THIS ART LIE EQUALLY IN THE INCIDENTAL?

ROBERT IRWIN
SEPTEMBER 4, 1975

24



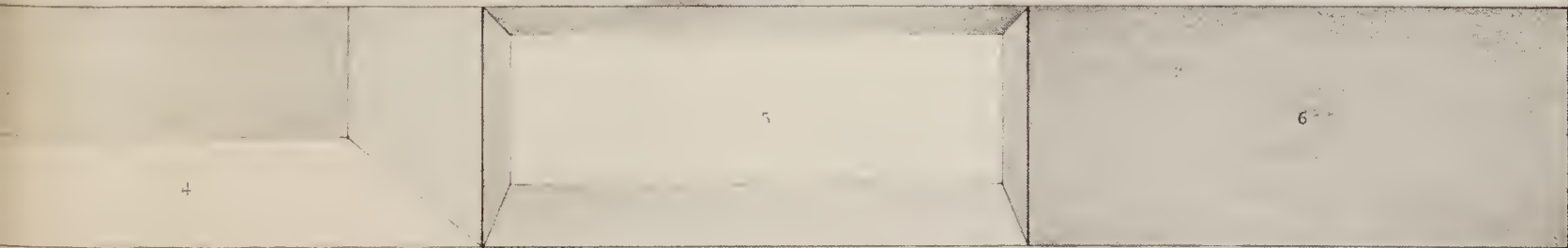
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3

$L +$ $L =$

1	2	3	4	5	
2	3	4	5	6	
3	4	5	6	1	
4	5	6	1	2	
5	6	1	2	3	
6	1	2	3	4	
6	1	2	3	4	5

THESE ARE THE RESULTS OF THE
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA OBTAINED
FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL WORK
CONDUCTED IN THE LABORATORY
DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS
AND ARE SUBJECT TO REVISION
AS MORE DATA ARE OBTAINED
AND THE ANALYSIS IS COMPLETED.



FALSE SILENCES

I DONT SWEAT

I HAVE NO ODOR

I INHALE, DONT EXHALE

NO URINE

I DONT DEFECCATE: NO EXCRETIONS OF ANY KIND

I CONSUME ONLY

OXYGEN, ALL FOODS, ANY FORM

I SEE, HEAR

I DONT SPEAK, MAKE NO OTHER SOUNDS, YOU CANT HEAR MY HEART, MY FOOTSTEPS

NO EXPRESSION, NO COMMUNICATION OF ANY KIND

AN OBSERVER, A CONSUMER, A USER ONLY

MY BODY ABSORBS ALL COMMUNICATIONS, EMOTIONS, SUCKS UP HEAT AND COLD

SUPER REPTILIAN SOAKING UP ALL KNOWLEDGE, COMPACTOR OF ALL INFORMATION

NOT GROWING

I FEEL DONT TOUCH

I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE KINDS AND QUALITIES OF THOUGHTS

I COLLECT, I CANT PROCESS

I CANT REACT TO OR ACT ON SENSATION

NO EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO SITUATIONS

THERE IS NO REACTION OF INSTINCT TO PHYSICAL OR MENTAL THREATS

YOU CANT REACH ME, YOU CANT HURT ME

I CAN SUCK YOU DRY

YOU CANT HURT ME

YOU CANT HELP ME

SHUFFLE THE PAGES

FIND ME A LINE

ARAPAHOE, ARAPAHOE

WHERE DID YOU GO

I BLINK MY EYES

TO KEEP THE TIME

 BLESS

 BLESS

 BLESS

you ○

you ○

you ○



No sculpture here,



here, or there.

Oracle

Schema Gallery

Florence, Italy

May 14, 1975

The performance was scheduled to begin at 9:30 in the evening. The first thirty-five people to arrive were let into the gallery and the door was locked. The gallery was dark except for one spotlight defining a circular area in front of one of three large windows. In front of each window hung a scrim that extended from ceiling to floor and obscured the window from view. The audience was asked to sit on the floor facing the windows and behind the spotlight area. After a few minutes, my shadow appeared on the scrim and said:

In February I did a piece where I lay on a triangular platform for twenty-two days. The platform was built in a corner high above the gallery floor. During the piece I just lay on the platform. I didn't see anyone and no one could see me. I didn't eat, talk, or come down. On the last night, after I had been there for three weeks, I had a dream, a sort of a nightmare. In the dream, I was doing a piece on a large bunk bed. I was high on the top bunk, and nobody could see me. I was always worried that the sheets were coming untucked, hanging down, spoiling the piece by making it look messy. I couldn't look to see if the sheets were really hanging down, because then someone would see me. All I could do was lie there and worry. Then in the dream, the piece was over and I was down from the bed. I was sitting in a bar with two friends. It was the first time I had seen anyone. I couldn't talk, and I didn't want anything. I could talk, really, but I didn't have anything to say. Nothing interested me. I knew that I was physically alright, but spiritually something had happened to me. It was as if I didn't need anything anymore, it wasn't just that I didn't want it. And it wasn't like I was crazy—it wasn't like that. It was like serenity. If there was ever a time when I should have been happy and relieved and want to talk, this should have been it. But it wasn't. It was like ennui or boredom, when nothing you think about is interesting or fun. I knew that people expected me to be happy, and they expected me to be glad to see them. I knew that it would be obvious that I was distant, and I couldn't hide the way I was feeling. It was like something had evaporated from me. I was sad and frightened. I realized what was wrong. I no longer had any desire to be part of the real world.

After the dream was related, the shadow disappeared and the audience was asked to leave.



From the King's Meditations



The Ninth Meditation

Years ago an old friend said she hoped we would continue always to be friends even if our lives took us to different places. Some time ago she disappeared from my life as I must have disappeared from hers and I haven't thought of her for years till now. And I hope that she's well but I'm not optimistic—because she always had bad luck. Still I don't especially want to have her show up. I don't think I have the energy to pick up the ends. Who knows what's become of her life? What she needs of me to make sense of herself—of me—for both of us? I've always admired people who visit the sick, remember birthdays and work for the general good. It's terrific to appear out of the blue, rescue a friend in distress—pressed on all sides. Good people, generous people, can choose that career, but I'm not a nurse or a professional soldier. I probably let people down, become responsible for wounding those I would help. But I'm afflicted by the limits of my energy and I worry about time.



The Second Meditation

Like another friend who covers my hand with hers and looks warmly into my eyes, compelling me to acknowledge her sympathy whether I feel like having it or not. After every complaint about my life or my work or the world's injustice she comforts me, reminds me how far I have come and how much further I will go. Who asked her? Why should I believe her? Is she so wise? In my innocence, in the natural course of conversation I begin my complaints. Her job is to listen, to agree if necessary, probably do all the things she does do but without suddenly taking on the self-conscious tone of a doctor or is it the tone of a mother? Either way it is always the tired tone of a servant. Such arrogance! I become alienated from the force of my complaints. They lose spontaneity, energy. They become framed, they sit out there between us, facing us, to be somehow handled and considered rather than spilled out and discarded. They are, after all, not important enough to require handling. I throw them out to be rid of them. My voice changes from anger to petulance. I can hear the change as well as feel it in my facial muscles. The odd thing is I can hear the strain on her. She loses her self and by what can only be an act of will forces herself into a tone and a role that obviously bore her. We both dislike it but I am not brave enough to accuse her. I think after all she will be hurt rather than relieved. The shabbiness of our situation embarrasses me. The deposed king raving about the loss of his kingdom to his only remaining servant. My helplessness is brought home to me. We part more depressed than ever. I hate my friend then.



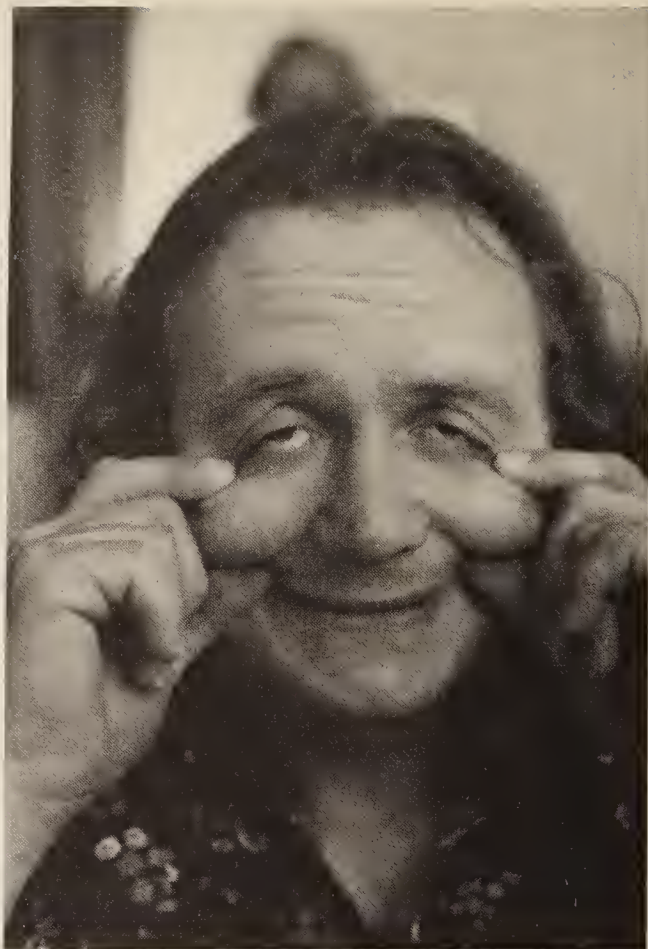
The Fourteenth Meditation

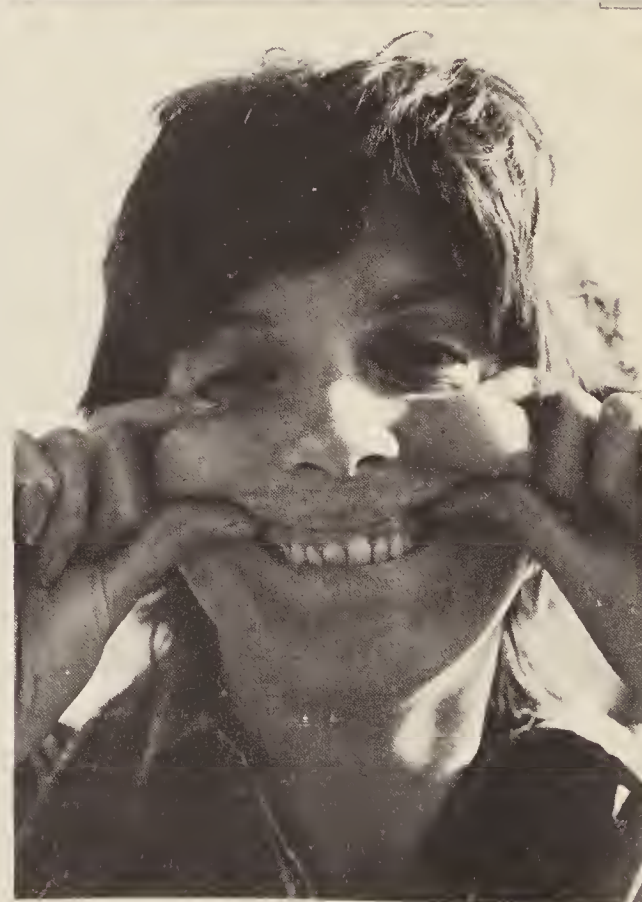
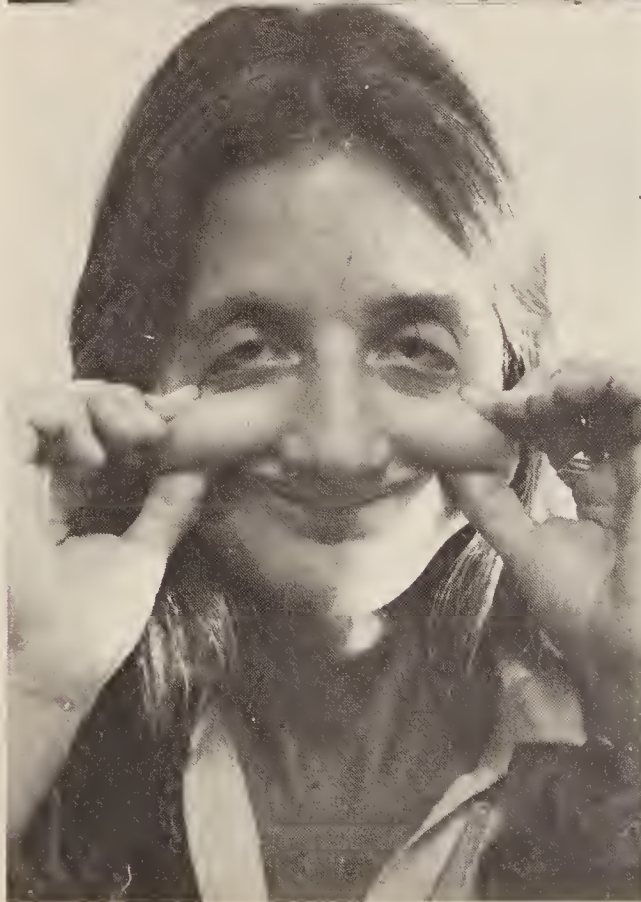
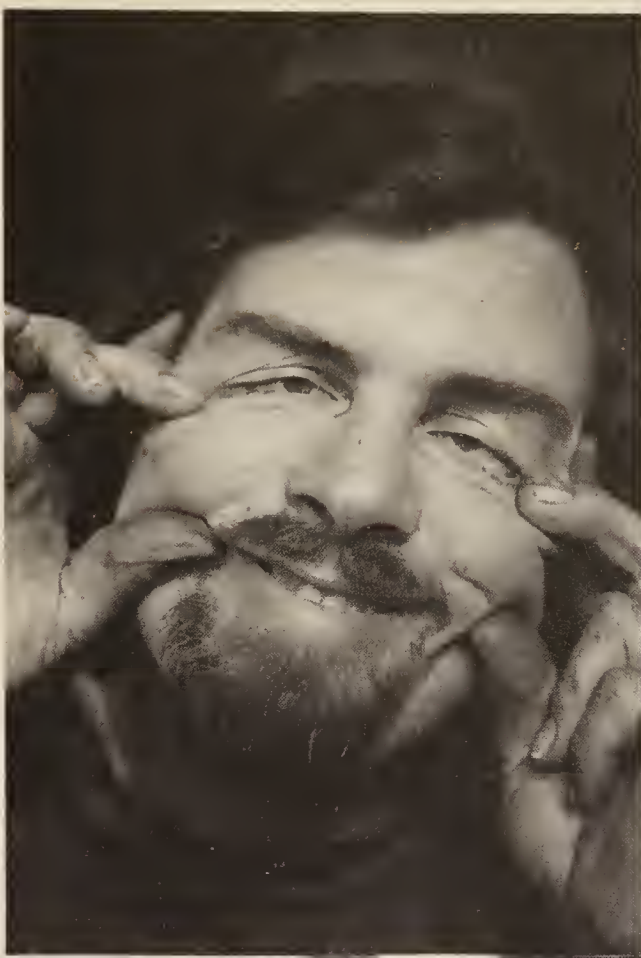
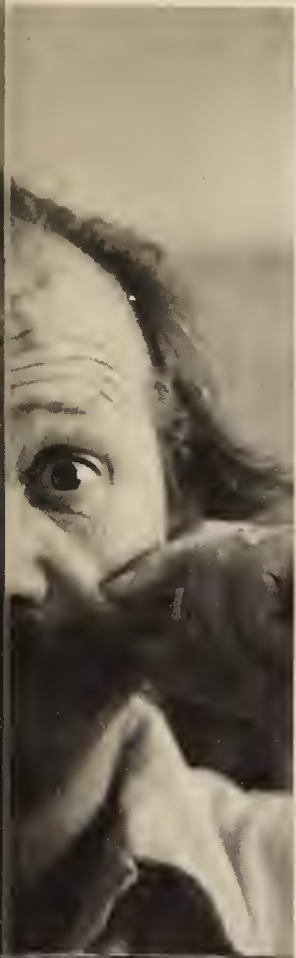
Years ago a powerful man tried to do me a good turn but he didn't try hard enough. He reported on me to the World knowing what the young suffer from most is silence and he was a gentleman. But he was a busy one. Or lazy. He didn't take the trouble to understand me before he spoke for me. Or rather, he chose to speak of me as I had been once, several years before. He was older than me, at least in the ways of the world and I'm surprised he didn't know you can't parcel out charity. If you can't give enough, better not give any. I may have been new to the world but I wasn't humble. I was furious, wrote him an angry letter, insulted him. Later I got scared. What if he took revenge on me? Destroyed me? I began to worry. It was my bad character. Helpless people often have bad characters. Only happy people, strong people, can afford good characters. Maybe that's why they do everything right. I became political, wrote him a second letter. I was charming, seductive, cried a lot, misrepresented myself and what he had said. I threw myself at his mercy. It was no use, he hated me. I still hated him. I was an ingrate and he had been magnanimous to the wrong person. But now, some years later, I don't regret the first letter, only the second. I worry about it sometimes. What if he kept it and shows it to people? Maybe I was lucky and he threw it away because it angered him and I wasn't important then. Our shared past embarrasses me when I think about it. I will execute him when the time is ripe.



The Thirteenth Meditation

I'm a fortunate age for success. Neither too young nor too old. The young people won't be jealous since I'm so much older. A young and practical person will think. "Somebody must be successful. If it can't be me this year at least it shouldn't be the one next to me. That one, he's been around a long time. He was here way before I got here. He's put in his time, he deserves it, it's only just." The older ones will approve of me because I'm not young. "Look" they will point at me with a certain pride. "No wonder he's so successful, he's not an upstart, but a mature, experienced person. Like us." In the first case I'm not taking anything away and in the second case I'm giving something back.

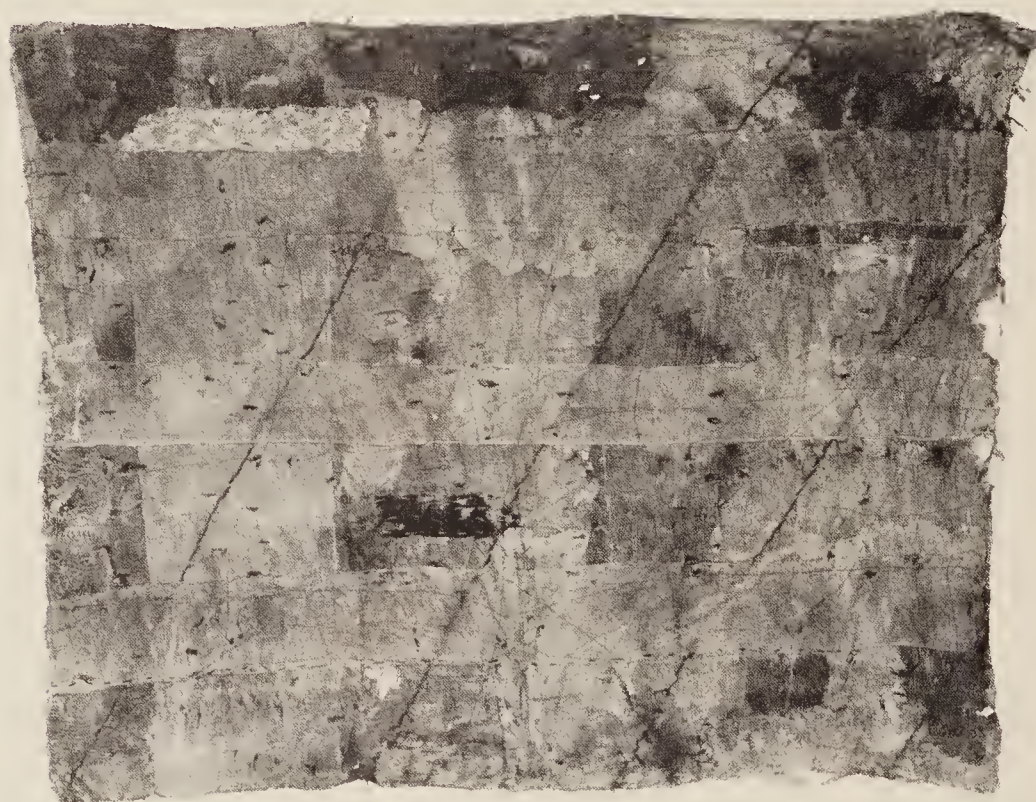




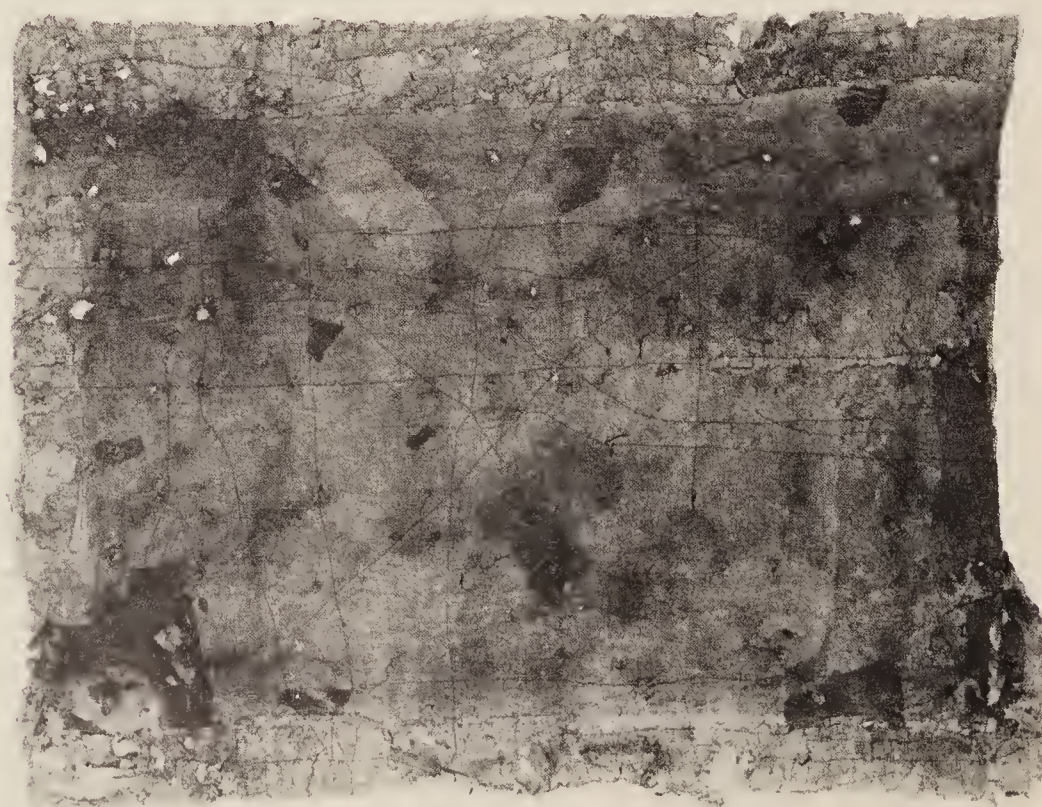
Novitiates demonstrate varying degrees of proficiency and enlightenment.



BASTA CRETINI, 8 x 12 FT.



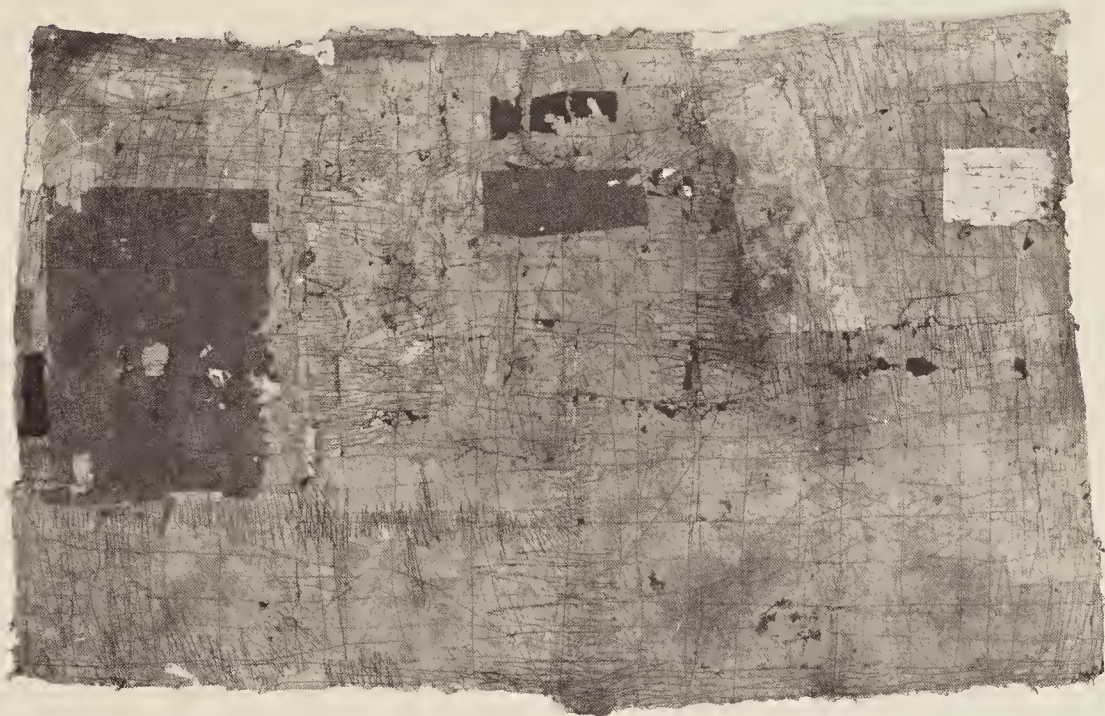
LAISSE LES BON TEMPS ROULER, 5 x 7 FT.



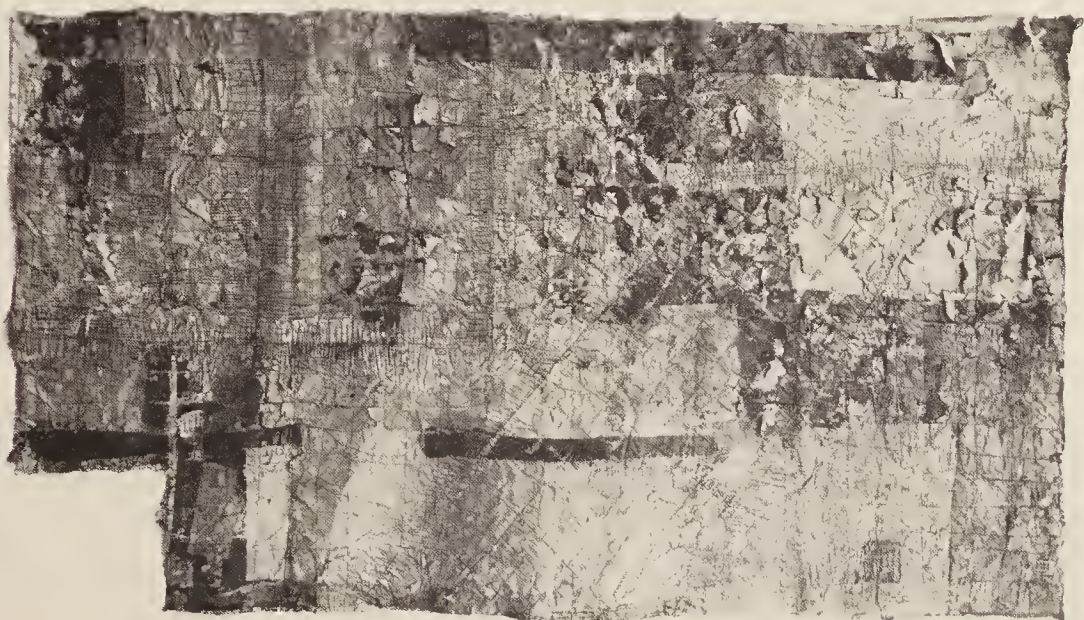
MAS FINA COMO LA MIERDA DE GALLINA, 5 x 7 ft.



BARBARA BURDEN'S HOT SEX DREAM, 4 x 7 FT.



MANET'S OLYMPIA, 5½ x 8 FT.



PAUCHUCOS KICKED IN MY WINDOW BUT THEY DIDN'T PUNCH OUT MY LIGHTS (I WAS TOO SMART), 5 x 8 FT.

WEST, HE SAID, (NOTES ON FRAMING)

VITO ACCONCI

1. *Making Up*

I am a guerrilla fighter, not an artist. This is not a show, but a hit-and-run attack. That isn't a gallery: it's a combat zone. . . . I can get to know the terrain here: how to enter, where to hide, the way to escape . . . I am out in the open now, I will meet the enemy and disappear . . . The trick is: keep moving, give the enemy no rest . . . I have to widen my territory . . . I have to set up a new base . . . I have to take another ground . . . (No, look, I'm an ordinary guy . . . take what I can get . . . pick up a show here, pick up a show there . . . keep myself busy . . . I got my troubles like everybody else . . . I have to find a place for myself, that's all . . . what to do, where to go . . .)

2. *The Set-Up*

A quick tour through the West Coast: from May 23 to June 7, 1975, there would be four shows—Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco. (But you need some more information, don't you, before you can make a case. You have to get a handle on the situation; you try to break it down. Listen: "It's hard to believe, but this is my first trip to the West Coast—okay, I'm a late starter—these will be my first real shows there, the first installations I'll have put together in person." Try this: "These aren't real shows—only one of them lasts more than a day or two—they're stop-overs, public appearances—something like advertisements." Or what about: "Things just seem to happen—once one show was set up, the others fell into place, spur-of-the-moment—it was out of my hands." Remember: "There's no money in this—these aren't commercial galleries, they're just spaces run by artists—look, two of the spaces are run by friends of mine—Sonnabend isn't behind this trip, it's more casual than that, I've arranged it all myself.")

3. *The Gamble*

I could claim that the trip was a dare, a matter of honor: to prove I was a 'working artist,' I'd obligate myself to do a different piece in each place—watch me, I can do a show a minute—this is a chance to prove I'm 'on.' (I could load the challenge by bringing in my career: I had to keep reactivating my image—I couldn't afford, then, to miss the West Coast. In turn, I could answer charges of careerism by claiming personal involvement, responsibility: I would have to do the shows because I couldn't, after all, disappoint my friends.)

4. *The Cheat*

All the while, I was off the hook: I would be in each city for only three days—no time to worry—there would be no time for a 'major piece.' (I could make my non-chalance, then, more purposeful: since the pieces would have to be hurried and sketchy, I could use them as first drafts, as rehearsals for future shows, larger shows. But my purpose could wear down, and turn to resignation: I was going West too late; my image there was already formed, through magazines, from early work—I was *The Flasher*, *The Ripper*, *The Divided Self*; the newer pieces, then, would seem like withdrawals, regressions; and since a single show couldn't reveal the links, the line of development, I wouldn't be able to live up to my image. So I could jump back, and make my resignation more cynical: I could assume a New York attitude—or at least what I expected a West Coast audience would expect a New York attitude to be—I could shrug off the West Coast shows; they didn't count anyway. But my cynicism could reverse itself, and turn to paranoia: there must be a reason why the shows had been arranged so haphazardly; there must be a reason, also, why I hadn't shown on the West Coast before this; I had to draw the necessary conclusions—nobody cared about the work, and I wouldn't have the time to try and change their minds.)

5. *The Pressure*

At some point, I'd have to turn away from the external circumstances, back to the work itself. I could claim that the trip *was* the work, that the terms of the trip reiterated the terms of the work: the trip would move me through public occasions—I could open up, I could hit on a

message to tell; the trip would drag me away from each place quickly, making each show precarious, difficult to finish in time—I could be on the spot—the trip would leave me no time between shows—I couldn't prepare myself, but I could always improvise; the trip would replace one unknown audience with another—I could try to find the right line, the right introduction, I could set up a meeting place. So I couldn't take the trip lightly; if I did, I wouldn't be taking my work seriously.

6. *The Cards On The Table*

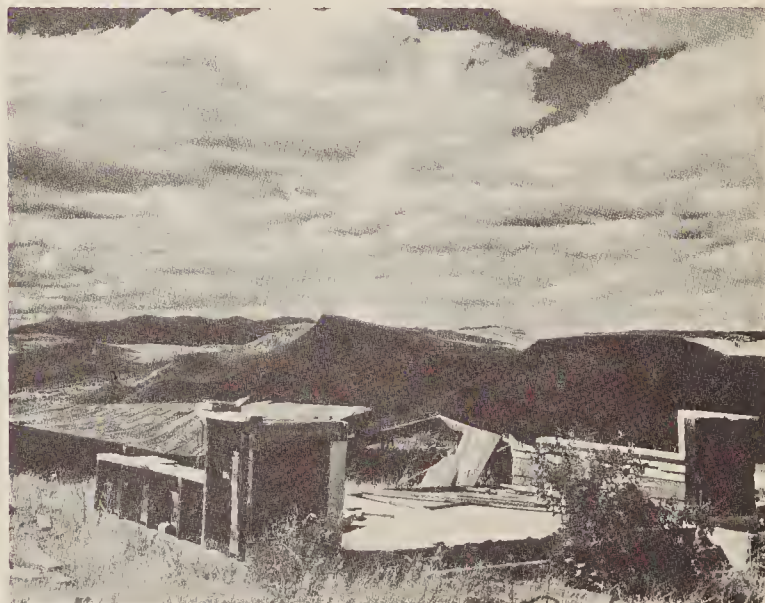
The trip would force me to know where I was. The earlier work had my presence to hang on—I faced the viewer, the viewer was there to meet me, to get at me; but my presence narrowed my field of contact—the viewer and I were in a closed circle, we were forced to be private; to bring in the world, then, I took myself out—the pieces gained space, a sense of drift, a complication of levels; but they lost focus, they lost directness—the viewer had no reason to be there, nothing to face; as if to fix a point, then, the pieces needed physical constructions—they were like sets for a state of mind; but the constructions hid the ground, they concealed the gallery—I was in an abstraction, I was in a fantasy world. So I would have to admit, by this time, that I was in trouble. The trip would force me to face up to myself: was I ready to go on working?

7. *The Stakes*

I could use the trip to recover my losses. The speed of the trip would force me to simplify, to clarify tactics. Since I had no more than a day or two to work on each piece, I couldn't develop complications; I would have to separate the work into strands—I'd know that another piece was coming up soon, I didn't have to throw everything into one. Since each installation would have a two- or three-day life-span, I wouldn't be given the resources for elaborate physical construction; I'd have to treat each space as a temporary campsite, a performance space to pass through. Since the trip was set up like a tour, with a definite route, I'd have to know where I was going; I'd be forced out of generalities (I wasn't doing a 'show,' I was doing the 'Portland show')—I couldn't help having in mind a concrete place. For me, then, the trip could be a way to get back on track: a chance to start a winning streak.

8. *The Breather*

But all this was too solemn; it had the feel of a 'last stand,' of 'personal salvation.' I could plan the trip, instead, as a relaxation, a sigh of relief. The trip meant the end of the season; it was a time to finish things off, smooth things out (and, at the same time, toss around some new ideas—I didn't have to worry about leaving them up in the air—there was nothing at stake yet). Then, too, there were no commercial involvements: I could have the illusion that I was out of the gallery system here—I was a free man—no strings attached—I could do whatever I wanted. (I couldn't help talking it up, working myself into it: this was the Way West—the wide-open spaces—stake out new territory, start life all over again.)



GHOST TOWN, MARYSVILLE, OREGON

9. *Placing myself* (1)

First stop, Portland. I could call it *The Great Northwest*: I could think in terms of density, blue-green, verticality, clouds like mountains; I could hope for the possibility of untouched ground, a new frontier. This was the a new frontier. This was the background, then, for a piece I had planned earlier, for another space—a piece I had to put off until I found the right context . . .

Voice of America: The floor is like a map of America (an irregular grid of string, ankle-height, across the floor, like contour-lines, like a map that's turned into a trap—projected over the floor, through the lines, are aerial views of American landscapes); at the far end of the room, opposite the entrance and overlooking the map, are two giant wooden chairs, nearly reaching the ceiling—seats for a mythical Mr. and Mrs. America; from the chairs comes an audiotope—calliope, jug bands, brass bands—like background music for America; now and then, my voice comes through the music: "Look, Ma, there's America rising, right at our feet"—it's as if I'm overseeing an American history, controlling an American mind; at the other end of the room, near the entrance, my voice spurts out intermittently—it's like a child's voice, I'm attacking the chairs, giving in to the chairs, cajoling the chairs; each time I speak, a blank slide-projector lights up the chairs like a flash of lightning, like an explosion . . .

This was a way, then, to set myself into position for the rest of the trip: a way to get into America. The Portland show was the only full-fledged show, a month long: time enough to stake out a claim, settle down—chairs in the corner of the country, a vantage point from which to look back at the rest of it.

10. *Placing myself* (2)

Second stop, Seattle. I couldn't get a sense of the place, get a handle to start with; the word 'Washington,' possibly, just seemed second-best here (the word needed clarification: 'the *state* of Washington'—it's as if the place becomes set apart, a state of mind, an abstraction). I could find no instrument of concretization here, nothing that could fix a piece down—I had to think in terms of *presenting* a piece, as if in mid-air, rather than *doing* a piece, on solid ground. This was an opportunity (not quite a place) to build a schematic, set up parameters of a way of working: I could try out here the prototype of a piece that was all image and no construction, all screen and no solidity . . .

A film projected over the floor; film, literally, as ground, as landscape (grass, dirt, rocks, water—shot from above by a moving camera); on either side of the film area, a speaker for an audiotope: sound as background music, as a kind of call across the ground (my voice—I'm singing a series of verbs, a series of adjectives—as if I'm calling into existence actions over the ground, mental states while moving over the ground); in the middle of the film area, a video monitor: video as close-up, as a figure in the ground (the screen is black—my head turns up, periodically, as if rising out of the earth, trying to make myself heard, bringing something back); from the side, slides projected, small, onto the film image: slides as details in the landscape, slides like a flicker, a mirage (conventional objects, objects a person might find in a landscape and take back home as a souvenir—intercut, now and then, with loaded objects, a gun, a knife, an object that has to be read as a clue) . . .

The piece was called *Body-Building in the Great Northwest*. The choice of title was a give-away; it reveals in spite of my stated intentions, I really wasn't satisfied with generalization—I had to talk some flesh into the piece—it was the piece itself that had to be built up. It's as if I expected some magic from Seattle: once I got there, I would know how to put myself into the piece—how to plant myself in the land until I could grow out of it, bearing a new image. (One problem was, I was throwing names around: I could never think of Seattle as the 'Great Northwest'—that name was owned by the place I arrived at first—Portland had used up my preconceptions.)

11. *Placing myself* (3)

Third stop, Los Angeles. I'd have to keep glitter in mind; I could see only veils of light, I'd think of the Silver Screen; I could build the filminess into layers—smog, flesh, perversity—that I'd want to fall into, sink in, get lost in; but, then, I could use it as a smoke-screen, a decoy: all the while, I'd be climbing out, up to a vantage point, a critical point—there, below me, I'd have a ready-made target, a culture that seemed to have designed itself for criticism. (I'd have to choose: do I run the streets like a madman, a

prophet? or do I stay behind the scenes, writing memoirs, collecting evidence, fiddling around—or, at least, trying to find the right notes—while the city burned?) The piece here, then, would be composed of light—streams of light, flashes of light; as in the Seattle piece, there'd be no hard constructions—it was as if there was nothing to support them here; so the piece would be like a screen without a foundation, a well of air without a bottom . . .



Pornography in the Classroom: A film is projected into the corner, oozing up from the floor onto the walls—the film is like a sea (close-ups of breasts, cunts, asses—the camera moves from one body to another, the bodies melt together—'a sea of tit'); a video monitor sits in the corner, in the middle of the film area, like a bottle lost in the sea (the sea is black—now and then, my prick rises up from the bottom, my prick 'talks': it's drowning, it's lost, it's pointing to land); on top of the monitor, a slide projector shoots slides into the opposite corner, up toward the ceiling (Marxist slogans, statements of Critical Theory—a warning, a direction, a way out) . . .

12. *Placing Myself* (4)

Fourth stop, San Francisco. There was no time to think for this one; it's as if I had mentally set a limit for myself—this determined to be 'too much.' (This notion, then, would have to be made use of in the piece: the piece should have the feel of a 'last gasp'.)

So I would save the piece until I got there. The right decision, I could tell myself: San Francisco was cozy, a place to settle down in, wind things up in—some of my closest friends were there, it would be like a homecoming—this was a place for celebration, not for a show. (I had to remember to use, in the piece, the feel of 'community ritual'.)

What happened then was: while doing the first three shows, this last show was always on my mind; but it was as if it had to remain vague—it had to be like a buzzing in my ear—in order for it to stay a threat, it mustn't be clarified. (The piece would have to keep this note of 'undercurrent,' 'wave of doom'.)

So, then, I headed for San Francisco with my mind clouded: I had hints for a structure. The piece would stretch over a large space: it would be a kind of shout from one end to the other—or, more precisely, a calling-out, a yearning. (It was as if, after the closed spaces of the other pieces, I needed here a sense of roughness, a break-out.) That yearning, then, would be developed into science fiction—I was thinking of the West as a jumping-off point, a point from which to go still further west. (Before I left New York, I had come across the sentence: "San Francisco is endowed with what is probably the grandest array of physical assets any city ever had"; since I couldn't compete with that, I had to fly over it, into science fiction: I had to keep, at the same time, a fear of destruction, a clue of suicide—after all, if the science fiction failed, if the space-ship floundered, I'd be jumping off into the ocean.)

I had some ideas, too, for the physical look of the piece. I wanted to make a sharp break between ceiling and floor, I wanted a sense of lowness. (Probably, I couldn't help thinking of San Francisco as comfortable and clustered—under the storm and beneath turbulence.) Also, I knew I would use slides, as in the other pieces; but here the slides would be blank flashes of light, as if they were yet to be filled in. (It was as if I wanted to close the tour with future potential—I wanted it to stay open-ended.)

13. *Mind Over Matter*

The pieces were before the fact; they were schemed out before I landed—the schemes didn't change much once I got into place. The pieces were based, then, on a West of the mind, a West inside me: a West that was always before me, that I was moving *toward*—not a West that I was set down *on*, that I was moving *in*.

On the other hand, the texts for the pieces were left hanging: they were written on the spot, at the last minute—I needed to be 'on location,' I had to see the installations rising in place. (It was as if I were waiting for voices—I had to put my ear to the ground, pick up the sound of hoofbeats.) After all, if I had developed the texts beforehand, they would have been foreign: they would have been rooted in enemy territory—the words of a 'New Yorker thinking West,' not a 'New Yorker transplanted.' I had to talk where I was. But, since I was in each place for only three days, I had no time to learn the language, I had no chance to use it. So, the way it was, the texts were scattered over a no-man's land; I was neither here nor there, I could talk of neither this nor that. (Now I could admit that, by bringing the West with me, and then skipping town fast, I didn't have to face the facts—no politics, no economic ground, no social ambience—I escaped the West altogether.)

14. *Shrunken Frames*

When I got to San Francisco, I closed myself up inside MOCA: I would spend two days of preparation here, before the piece began. It was a matter of coming to a place and, immediately, forgetting it: I wouldn't be *around* San Francisco—instead, I condensed myself into a point, hidden inside it—I was saying, let San Francisco go on without me. It was as if, after steady traveling, I couldn't stand to see another street, another sky; I wouldn't know what to do with it—it all looked the same to me. All I could do was isolate myself; once I had done that, all I could do, inside my isolation booth, was go crazy—turn the place upside-down.

Thought and action were the same here; the activation of the piece nearly repeated its preparation. While working out the piece, I wandered around the space—the elevations, the columns, made it look like a giant stage; I kept coming back to an area of chairs at one end—this was like a make-shift living room, from which I could look out onto the stage as if it were a monstrous TV set; I could settle here a while—it wasn't a 'space' I was looking at, but a 'walked-through space.'

The piece itself, then, rearranged the furniture and carried on the preparation, put the waiting on another level. The chairs were moved out of the living-room area, into the stage area: the chairs, and whatever else happened to be in the space, were fixed, upside-down, to the ceiling (the ceiling, now, became the floor—the people would be walking upside-down); onto the ceiling, three slide projectors shot blanks of light, irregularly, through the furniture (what I wanted was the feel of searchlights aimed at another world—or the feel of ray-guns—the feel of appearance and disappearance); there's an audiotape, with one speaker at either end of the space: continuous footsteps, drifting over the space (it's as if I'm walking here, alongside viewers)—my voice in spurts, from different directions, in different intensities: "Calling Ground Control . . . Ground Control . . . A . . . B . . . B . . . Ground Control to C . . . C . . . See the beach . . . The blocks on the last beach . . ." (My voice should be like a buzz in their ears as they walk through the space: I'm on their backs)—I'm speaking in single words, exclamations (it's as if I'm floating, I can't stand still enough to describe, I can only point, I can try to grab)—I'm wishing for a disaster, a cataclysm—I'm hoping to be a ghost, to be the air through the space, the air through the people inside the space.

I called the piece *Waiting for the End*. (I have to assume, almost desperately, that I meant something more than just the end of the tour.) It was, in fact, a matter of waiting for the text: I almost didn't want a text, I wanted to skip over words, grasp on to an extra-terrestrial language; the text,

then, seemed designed to stay in a preparation stage, as if I was afraid to pin anything down; after all, since I had trapped myself inside the space, all I could pin down was the space itself; otherwise, I'd have to pin myself down, I'd have to finish myself off; to save myself from that, I turned the space on its end, trying for a way out of it; but, then, there was no time to leave the space and bring anything back—the piece was over.



THE 4-D MAN

15. *Framing Errors*

After the MOCA show, I was telling Terry Fox about the origins of the piece; my notions of San Francisco, I said, came from *The Doors: When The Music's Over—The End—Break On Through To The Other Side*. "But," he reminded me, "The Doors were an LA group."

(So that was the melody ringing in my ears; I was off-key; it wasn't the Doors, it was the Jefferson Airplane: not the Doors' directness but the Airplane's insinuations—not the Doors' frontality but the Airplane's deep space—not Jim Morrison's single voice, on its own, but Grace Slick's voice subsumed into the group, into the cluster. That's what I should have understood here: a sense of grounding—the grounding of the Airplane: their drive, now, almost smothered by multi-layering—a drive that needed a group behind it, a culture to represent—a drive that, once that culture was gone, had to resort to forcing itself, had to become a labored push—it had to keep adding people, in a desperate attempt to keep itself going, sweep itself upward—it had to change its name, hopefully becoming a Starship—it lost itself in weight, a weight that churned out a group roar, a muffled roar, taking the place of the scream.)

16. *Re-Framing (1)*

The places were bigger than the pieces; the pieces couldn't live up to the places.

The Portland piece avoided the light. By keeping the piece in the dark, and showing slides, I was setting up a stage for America: here was America-in-miniature—an American melodrama, closed up within four walls. But this was an unnecessary substitute; the real America, after all, was just outside the door. (I remember overhearing, in Portland, talk about "the good work the legislature was doing here"; but I could have no idea what that referred to—I had never found out, really, where I was.) It was as if I sensed that the clear sky would test me: it would force me to face the facts, force me to be more precise than I could ever hope to be; I knew I was isolated—my head was in a cave—the sun would be too much to take—it would blind me, bouncing off the snow-capped mountains. So I had to abdicate; I turned to history as a closed book; I went underground, into the dark ages. (What I could have done, at least, was to keep on going—go further under—give the underground a reason to be. The piece could have been a reverse image: an undergrowth of America, an America waiting to erupt. I could have placed the piece, then, literally under the ground; it should have been difficult to get to, people would have to dig their way down, worm their way in; even if they refused it, even if they stayed on top, they would know it was down there, still there, getting ready.)

17. *Re-Framing (2)*

The Los Angeles piece avoided space. By projecting slides from one corner to the other, and so tying the corners together, I brought the space into itself: I made a center. But

the center was make-shift, simulated; it couldn't hold up against the sprawl outside, the stretch of highways—Los Angeles was, after all, a city without a center, not a place to be in but a map to move across. It was as if I was afraid to loosen myself up. I refused to let myself go, into the tide: I wouldn't face the future, I wouldn't read the signs of the times (instead, I projected my own messages onto the walls—I would read what I already knew—I wouldn't let my messages shake me up). By making a center, then, I could mix things together, build something up: I could make color—color of bodies, color of flesh (I was trying to represent bodies, to keep up the image of bodies, when, all the while, Los Angeles was peeling bodies apart, abstracting them). So I wasn't doing what I said in the piece: I wasn't drowning in bodies, I was hiding in them—I was using them to anchor myself down, to keep my own body whole, safe from the pull of the wave around me. By covering myself in color, then, I tried to ward off the terror of neutrality: I tried to forget the sheet of white that was spreading over the city, spreading further, until the city itself became a white film, a white ooze, over everything else around it.

18. *Re-Framing* (3)

The San Francisco piece avoided people. I could have claimed that, by turning things upside-down, I was reaching for the sky, I would bring down the sky; but all I did was leave the ground, get off the streets. San Francisco, I should have remembered, was the place of street theater: I could have gone into the crowd then, I could have made direct approaches. Instead, I kept out of sight; I drew back and, from behind the scenes, I made announcements, I stated doom—when, all the while, together, we could have been busy averting doom, retracking it into the ocean—or, at least, we could have been creating doom, taking it into our own hands, bringing it down on our heads, willfully. (I could try to claim that I didn't have time for realism, my mind was on something else, I was on the track of science fiction. But San Francisco wasn't the place for science fiction; San Francisco wasn't abstract enough. So I was out of time, out of order: I should have gone to San Francisco

first—the last sign of people before the leveling, before Los Angeles.)

19. *Breaking The Spell*

The Seattle piece—I can't go over that; I never understood Seattle, I couldn't know what I was missing. The piece admitted this: of the four pieces, it was the only one that didn't fill the space—it was kept off in one corner of the gallery—it made no attempt to work itself into the audience. I could claim that this was a way to come to my senses; I couldn't even pretend anymore that I was coming to terms with place; all I could do was throw something in—drop something off—let it fall where it may—let me out.

20. *Anchors*

I could claim that the pieces were pretexts: each piece put me in place, installed me in a city I didn't know—the piece kept me busy, giving the place some time to grow on me. My show, then, wasn't a show *by* me but a show *for* me—while people came to see me, I would be seeing the city through them. (Showing away from a home ground, then, becomes a matter of scouting, borrowing: I can pick up something from the place and, the next time I show there, I can give it back, re-done by me, inside the new piece that I do then. But, by that time, the place would have changed, and I wouldn't know how until I returned; so what I brought back—my gift, my acquired magic trick—was already out of date; I would always be one step behind.)

21. *Out of Frame*

"I can't go home again," I said, coming home to New York. I had something to foresee now: "I've seen the future, and its name is . . . its name is let me see now, its name is . . . Los Angeles!" My mind, then, can be there, while I'm standing here. Now I can be the man for slogans: "There's no room to move in New York" . . . "New York is just another Europe" . . . I can talk away the flaws in my work: after all, I'm in the wrong place here. So, now, I can walk down the street as if I'm floating, as if I'm walking on air: I've talked myself, finally, out of place—I'm nowhere.



THE UNDERGROUND GARDENS OF BALDASARE FORESTIERE (1879-1946)

KATHAN BROWN

From the *Fresno Bee*, May 3, 1924:

With a piece of orange peel in one hand and a lighted match in another, the objects held about two inches apart, Baldasare Forestiere, world's champion digger, yesterday demonstrated the explosive nature of the oil in an orange skin. "Now watch," he said, squeezing the orange peel towards the flame. The gap between the peel and the match suddenly crackled and snapped as the inflammable gas ignited. . . .

Forestiere had just been conducting a party of Fresnans through his subterranean palace of fifty rooms which he has excavated during the past sixteen years. . . . The work has been finished in the rough, but the vast amount of labor required to convert the raw material into the vision stored in Forestiere's mind almost overwhelms him, he confessed yesterday. "All that I have done is nothing," he pined, "For it required very little money, perhaps \$300, but now I have to begin to use cement in large quantities. I have to reinforce the roof where there are streaks of loose earth that break through the rock."

Twenty-two years after this article was written, Baldasare Forestiere died in Fresno of pneumonia that developed as a complication of a hernia operation. He was 67. He had spent 38 years in Fresno, and had completed, alone, with nothing but hand tools and a wheelbarrow, 100 rooms and patios linked by tunnels underneath seven acres of land. Sometimes these rooms are one over another, sometimes 20 feet or more underground, yet they are light, open, and full of vegetation.

Forestiere's family had been citrus growers in Messina, Sicily. He came to America in 1900 when he was 21 years old, with dreams of establishing his own citrus plantation in California. After eight years as a construction worker in the New York subways, he had saved enough to purchase land in Fresno.

But the citrus plantation dream shriveled in the 100° heat of a Fresno summer, and the land he had bought turned out to be solid rock, beneath a thin layer of topsoil. Forestiere went to work as a laborer in a neighboring vineyard, and in his spare time chipped away at the hardpan on his property with a pickaxe. Eventually he had hollowed out a room, where he spent more and more time to escape the heat. The hole he had excavated before he started to burrow into the rock became a patio for the room, and, hauling dirt down to fill planters, he landscaped it so his room would have a pleasant view. This was to be his pattern of building for many years.

He added more rooms, brought down his belongings, built a fireplace and sealed off the living quarters with glass doors and windows against winter's damp. Later he built skylights in many rooms; some of these he covered with glass (removable in summer), others he left open, placing planters under them to catch the rain. As he became more and more involved with his building, he graded the patios so that rain would run into sump pits. He balanced the skylights and curves of his tunnels so that no spot would be dark at any time of day, and he arranged arches, skylights and doors for maximum air circulation.

His method of construction was basically to chip out the rock. He then used the rock he had removed to reinforce areas that needed it, putting the chunks back with concrete. Where necessary, metal rods were also used as reinforcement—these were bed slats, pieces of automobiles and any other junk metal he could find. Some are still visible, but only in unfinished areas. Forestiere's handiwork is very neat. In fact, he is said to have been exacting about it, tearing out and re-doing work by well-meaning friends, who drank his homemade wine and then sometimes would offer their help.

Forestiere never cultivated his land as a business, as he had at first intended, but he had it arranged economically, for subsistence and for beauty. He kept tropical fish in a large aquarium with a glass bottom so he could look up at it from a room below. In his kitchen patio he had a shallow pool where he kept fish he had caught in a nearby river and planned to eat. He had many decorative plants, a vegetable garden, and, most importantly, his fruit trees. Each of these is in a planter and has its own skylight or patio, so the trees are chosen carefully for variety of both fruit and ripening times. Many of his trees are multiple fruits grafted on a single trunk.

His interest in grafting was shared by some Japanese friends who visited him often. During the second world war, when these friends were taken to internment camps, Forestiere renounced his American citizenship—something he had only just acquired by taking the naturalization tests.

Baldasare Forestiere apparently had many friends in Fresno. Perhaps he was considered eccentric, but the tone of the newspaper article I quoted earlier is definitely respectful. The headline of that article is, "Tunnel Artist Builds Cave Resort." Evidently even at that early date Forestiere was thinking and talking about his monumental project that was never finished; a project that testified to his sociability: an underground Italian restaurant, where people could get out of the heat.

He recognized that the automobile had come to California to stay, and in the late 1920's started to dig an auto tunnel to the spot where his restaurant would be. This is not just an ordinary tunnel. It is 800 feet long, gracefully curving, with a footpath alongside and rock-carved benches where walkers can rest, with landscaping—open areas alternating with the actual tunnel. The visitor would drive in, and a man would be waiting to park his car. The customer could then place his order, and walk out into the underground gardens while the food was being prepared. Each table would have its own tree growing out of it, and its own skylight above, and there would be musicians playing on the little stage at one end of the hall.

Before he died, Forestiere had completed the auto tunnel and a network of delivery and service tunnels, pantries and kitchen. He had excavated the hall for the restaurant. His brother finished it with concrete blocks and the rafters and roof from an old barracks the military was tearing down nearby (no skylights).

When we were there, the stage was full of Disney-like paper-mache animals, ready for some charity event. The people of Fresno use the hall for parties; there is a vast spook-house made out of Forestiere's



tunnels and rooms on Halloween. In the summer, guides take tourists through, reciting a memorized commentary (excerpts from it appear under the photographs). This is all quite straightforwardly done; the artist's work is mostly not being tampered with, and the owners ("the family") seem to be trying to make it available with a minimum of commercialization. Probably one reason it has not been commercialized more is that there are very few tourists in Fresno. Who would go in that heat for pleasure?

When, at the airport car-rental counter, we asked directions to the Underground Gardens, the atten-

dant couldn't believe we'd come there just to see that. "I used to see that crazy old man when I was a kid," he said, "Bringing that wheelbarrow full of dirt out and dumping it."

It was July, and we arrived at the gardens before nine a.m. of what seemed a pleasant day. We spent several hours down there, feeling comfortable, then emerged about three o'clock to a furnace-blast of air. It was 100° and suffocating. The incredible words of the car-rental man kept pounding in my head during the oppressive drive back to the airport: "Crazy old man."

PICTURE CAPTIONS ARE FROM THE "COMMENTARY GUIDELINES" USED AS A TEXT FOR THE GUIDED TOURS OF THE GARDENS.



WE WILL NOW BE ENTERING THE HOME WHICH MR. FORESTIERE BUILT. IT HAS A LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN, TWO BEDROOMS AND A READING OR WRITING ROOM, A BEDROOM COURT AND BATH. THE FRENCH DOORS HE DID NOT MAKE, BUT HE DID INSTALL THEM. HE ALSO BROUGHT IN THE ELECTRICITY WHICH YOU SEE OVERHEAD. ON THE LEFT-HAND SIDE OF HIS FIREPLACE IS A STOVEPIPE WHICH GOES SIDeways. HE MADE THIS SO THAT WHEN HE HAD A FIRE IN THERE SOME OF THE HEAT COULD ESCAPE AND GET THE CHILL OFF THE BEDROOMS BEHIND. THERE IS ANOTHER STOVEPIPE CENTRALLY LOCATED OVER THE FIREPLACE, UP HIGHER, TO ACT AS A DRAFT FOR THE SMOKE AND TO CARRY IT TO THE ABOVE-GROUND LEVEL.



THE KITCHEN, WHICH IS OLD-FASHIONED NOW, WAS MODERN IN HIS TIME. HE HAD AN ICE BOX, NOW WE HAVE REFRIGERATOR-FREEZERS. HE HAD A RADIO, NOW WE HAVE T.V. BACK HERE HE HAS A BANK OF SHELVES, A SLIDING GLASS WINDOW, AND A PANTRY. HERE JUST BEHIND US HE CARVED A SEAT OUT OF THE WALL. IT'S BETWEEN HIS STOVE AND THE PULL-OUT TABLE WHICH YOU SEE HERE. HE COULD SIT HERE AND EAT. IF COMPANY SHOULD ARRIVE, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE TO FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE BECAUSE OF INTERRUPTING HIS MEAL, HE COULD SLIDE THE TABLE BACK IN, TAKE HIS FOOD AND DISHES AND PUT THEM ON THE CONCEALED SHELVES HE HAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE TABLE.



THROUGH THIS DOOR IS HIS GUEST BEDROOM. MUCH LATER IN HIS LIFE MR. FORESTIERE MADE AN ARRANGEMENT WITH A WOMAN TO LIVE DOWN HERE TO SEE IF SHE COULD ADJUST TO UNDERGROUND LIVING. IF SHE COULD, THEY WOULD GET MARRIED. IF NOT, HE WOULD COMPENSATE HER FOR HER TIME. WE DO NOT KNOW WHO SHE WAS OR HOW LONG SHE STAYED. SHE DID EVENTUALLY LEAVE. HE MADE HER THIS DRESSER THAT YOU SEE IN FRONT, TAKING TIME TO DECORATE IT WITH LITTLE STONES. NOW OVER HERE TO THE BACK OF THE ROOM YOU SEE A CEMENT APERTURE PROTRUDING. THIS IS WHERE THE STOVEPIPE FROM THE FIREPLACE COMES THROUGH. THE CEMENT APERTURE IS MADE SO' THAT IT WOULD CATCH SPARKS, SOOT, OR ASHES THAT MIGHT FLY THROUGH. ABOVE THE FIREPLACE IS A HOLE DRILLED COMPLETELY THROUGH ON A SLANT AND IT IS AIMED AT THE FRENCH DOORS, ABOUT KNEE HIGH. THIS IS WHERE HE KEPT HIS SHOTGUN.



AS YOU COME ACROSS THE BRIDGE OVER THE POND ON THE FAR SIDE, YOU SEE A BATHTUB. THIS WAS BALDASARE'S BATHROOM. THE TUB SITS UPON BOARDS. UNDER THE BOARDS IS A HOLE THAT THE BATH WATER DRAINED INTO. ABOVE GROUND, OVERHEAD, HE HAD A METAL TANK TO HOLD THE WATER. HE HAD A HOSE ATTACHED TO THE TANK COMING DOWN TO THE BATHTUB. IN FRONT OF THE ALCOVE HE HAD A PIECE OF CANVAS. OF COURSE, LIVING ALONE MOST OF THE TIME, HE PROBABLY DIDN'T NEED IT.



WE WILL NOW BE GOING INTO THE CHURCH MR. FORESTIERE CREATED. AT THE FRONT YOU CAN SEE HIS PODIUM, AND OVERHEAD THE BELL HE WENT TO THE BAY AREA TO GET. MR. FORESTIERE'S OLDER BROTHER, TONY, HAD GOTTEN MARRIED AND HAD A COUPLE OF CHILDREN, AND EVEN HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, JOSEPH, HAD MARRIED A LOCAL GIRL AND HAD STARTED HIS FAMILY, AND BALDASARE WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL LONELY. SO HE DECIDED TO GET MARRIED. HE ASKED THE GIRL HE WAS COURTING AT THE TIME TO BECOME HIS WIFE, AND HE BUILT THIS CHURCH FOR THEM TO BE MARRIED IN. BUT SHE TACKED ON THE CONDITION THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO BUILD HER A HOUSE ABOVE GROUND. HE TOLD HER, NO, THAT IF SHE MARRIED HIM THEY WOULD BE LIVING UNDERGROUND.



FINALLY, WHEN HE REALIZED HE WOULDN'T BE GETTING MARRIED, HE DECIDED HE WOULD TURN HIS GARDENS INTO A MEDITERRANEAN TYPE RESTAURANT UNDERGROUND. HE FELT IT WOULD BE A SUCCESS BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD COME TO HIS RESTAURANT BECAUSE IT WOULD BE COOL AND PLEASANT UNDERGROUND. HE TURNED MORE TO HIS WORK, AND CREATED AN AUTO TUNNEL. IT STARTS AT SHAW AVENUE AND GOES BACK TO THE FRONT OF HIS RESTAURANT WHERE PEOPLE COULD GET OUT OF THEIR CARS AND A MAN COULD THEN DRIVE THE CAR AWAY AND PARK IT. THE TUNNEL IS OVER EIGHT HUNDRED FEET LONG AND HE DID EVERY BIT OF IT BY HAND.



THE TREE YOU SEE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE IS OVER FORTY YEARS OLD. MR. FORESTIERE WANTED TO USE CEMENT TABLE TOPS IN HIS RESTAURANT AND HE WANTED SOMETHING IN THE MIDDLE LIKE A CENTERPIECE, SO HE PLANTED THE ORANGE TREE YOU SEE IN THIS ONE TABLE, WHICH WAS A MODEL FOR OTHERS WHICH WOULD GO IN THE RESTAURANT. HE DID NOT WANT THE TREE TO GROW BIG, SO INSTEAD OF MAKING THE SKYLIGHT SO THE SUN COULD GET DOWN TO IT, HE MADE IT SO THE TREE WOULD GET ENOUGH SUN TO KEEP IT ALIVE BUT NOT ENOUGH SO IT WOULD GROW TALL. INSTEAD OF USING RODS IN HIS TABLE AND MAKING IT IN ONE PIECE, HE MADE IT IN TWO PIECES, SO IF A TREE DIED OR HE DECIDED TO PLANT SOMETHING ELSE, ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS PULL IT APART AND TAKE THE OLD ONE OUT AND PUT THE NEW ONE IN.



HERE IS ONE OF THE MANY PLANTERS MR. FORESTIERE MADE. BY LOOKING UP YOU CAN SEE THAT HE MADE HIS SKYLIGHT A LITTLE SMALLER THAN THE PLANTER. HE DID THIS SO HE COULD CONTROL THE RAIN WATER AND KEEP IT FROM FLOODING. THE TREE YOU SEE IN THIS PLANTER IS OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OLD, YET IT LOOKS LIKE A YOUNG SAPLING. WELL, CITRUS NEEDS A LOT OF HOT SUN DURING THE SUMMER TIME, AND THE SMALL SKYLIGHT DIDN'T LET VERY MUCH IN. HE KEPT EXPERIMENTING THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE WITH HIS SKYLIGHTS UNTIL HE HIT UPON A SKYLIGHT THAT LET PLENTY OF SUN IN TO MAKE HIS TREES GROW VIGOROUSLY, AND YET HE WAS ABLE TO CONTROL THE RAIN.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHAN BROWN AND KEVIN PARKER.

NOW YOU CAN SEE THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE TWENTY-TWO FEET UNDERGROUND, THERE IS STILL A LOT OF LIGHT. IF YOU WILL LOOK UP TO THE TOP OF THE TREE, ALONG THE OUTSIDE, YOU WILL SEE A LEDGE ALL THE WAY AROUND. MR. FORESTIERE MADE THIS LEDGE SO THAT WHEN THIS TREE WITH ALL ITS FRUIT GOT RIPE, HE ONLY HAD TO WALK AROUND THE LEDGE AND PICK IT FROM THE TOP OF THE TREE, WHICH IS STILL UNDERGROUND. NOW ON THIS TREE ARE SEVEN DIFFERENT GRAFTS, ALL THAT STILL PRODUCE FRUIT. WE DO NOT COUNT THE BITTERSWEET, WHICH IS THE MOTHER TRUNK ON WHICH HE MADE HIS GRAFTINGS, OR THE GRAFT THAT WAS CUT OFF AFTER HIS DEATH.

